"THE MOSS MILL MYSTERY," A STARTLING DETECTIVE STORY, NEXT WEEK

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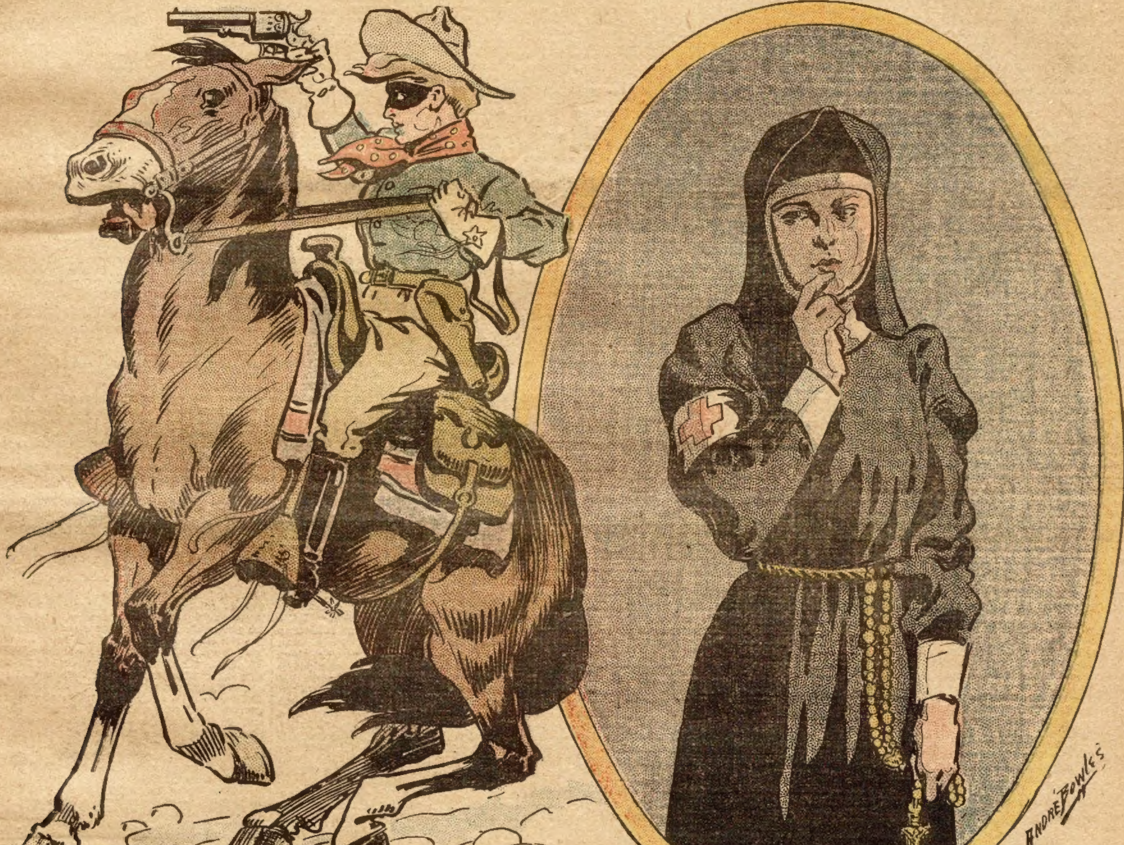

THE BEAUTIFUL THIEF.

A STORY OF INHERITED TENDENCY. BY ALVAH MILTON KERR.

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We were all of good-humor, seven men and three ladies, swaying a big stage-coach as it bowled through the mountains of northern California toward the valley of the Sacramento. We on the top seats were possibly in the happier mood, since up there the magnificent view was unobstructed, the exhilarating sense or daring danger more palpable, and what, perhaps, was of more enlivening moment, up there were the ladies. There, too, was the driver popping his long lash over the flying horses, profoundly self-contained and indifferent to the beauties and the dangers of the way, but pleasurably noting from the corners of his eyes with what awe his performance filled us.

Through all that region forests swing above one on the mountain-sides, forests billow below one in the valleys, streams leap into the gulches and roar down rocky stairways out of sight, and as one rises upon the highest crest of these mountain-waves, Shasta leaps up white and wonderful against the north, Lassen looms lofty and snow-capped to the south, with the Coast Range lying in bands of brownish lilac far away against the west, and the vast trough of the Sacramento swimming below.

Here on the spine of the Range the coach paused, the horses panting and steaming in the cool air of the high altitude, while the driver got down and inspected the brakes before we began to descend. As we sat there, gazing on the stupendous panorama spread out before us, Judge L——, a gentleman who had entertained us during our long ride with numerous narratives of early California days, pointed off to the south and said:

"Do you see those dark mountain-cones, that look like old-fashioned beehives floating in a lake of vapor, there in the valley? They are the Black Buttes near Marysville. The vague lime-colored splotch lying under the haze to the right is the town. It is quite seventy-five miles away. We have been talking of stage-robbers on the way up, suggested, no doubt, by the splendid openings for enterprise of that sort here among the mountains, and discussing the phenomenon of theft in general; well, thirty years ago I had a bit of experience in that direction over there to the left of the Buttes, where what from this distance looks like a great bank of shadow is in reality a heavy forest stretching along the face of the range. I encountered a person there in whom the malady we have been discussing was curiously illustrated, as well as an item in a train of incidents quite as odd as anything in my legal experience. As I intimated on the way up, I incline to the belief that all real criminals are mentally diseased, their crimes usually indicating the degrees and trend of their dementia. In this case it ran altogether in the direction of theft; a more rare and extreme example, I believe, has never fallen in my way"

The judge paused. He had a limber tongue, an interest-fetching way with it, and a dash of facetious exaggeration at points that made us willing listeners. Early in the journey we had voted him an unusual and, so far as one might judge, reliable talker. He had, however, like the driver, a sly enjoyment of our appreciation that was perhaps rather stimulating, albeit his achievement was not bad, and the matter of it doubtless true. As we descended, zigzagging back and forth across the face of the mountain to break the steepness of the grade, he presently continued.

"I first had to do with the person mentioned thirty years ago. I was just in from the East; fresh from graduation in the law and from my parents' disappointment that the gold-hunting fever had carried me away from them and the life they had chosen for me. For some months after my arrival I worked in placer mines on the Feather River, away off there to the south of Lassen's Peak. Five hundred men were panning and sluicing along the stream, and many a tragedy and curious bit of life-history had enactment there, which, in the madness of the time, went unrecorded, save, I suppose, by the angel who keeps books for us all.

"Well, one August evening—I remember how suddenly night use to close in upon us there in the gulch—a stripling of a fellow came limping down the trail through the pines, and crept bashfully into camp. He was an odd-looking youth, dressed in a baggy, ill-fitting suit of cast-off clothing, with a black mass of curls clustering about the nape of his neck, and big, restless brown eyes. He had a cringing, curious air, that got him a chaffing repulse from the men, but he looked so white and hungry and harmless that we presently took him in, gave him supper and a pair of blankets, and told him to stow himself away as best he could, a privilege quite as ample as the best of us could boast in those days. When morning came it was found that one of the men had been robbed of a big sack of "dust," and a rush was made for the fallen tree-top where the stranger had made his bed. But there he was, quietly sleeping, with something like a mournful shadow on his thin face. He had thrown one of the blankets over some of the fallen branches, and was lying under it upon the other, and something in the delicacy of his figure and the sadness of his look made us withdraw in a rather shamefaced fashion. Presently, as we were seaching in the other direction, a hard-visaged fellow, who had but recently come into the region, and against whom rather compromising things had been whispered, was encountered down the gulch. Upon this luckless fellow the loser of the gold-dust bounced at once, crying out in the insanity of his suspicion, that the man had robbed him, and was just returning from the thicket, where he had doubtless hidden the bag. In fifteen minutes there was a rope about the poor wretch's neck, it was over a limb, and he was in the air. Our purpose was to force a disclosure from him as to where he had secreted the gold, if he had taken it, though I think we had as lief hung him as not, being half-savage in those days with hatred of theft, and not tender at all of the necks of those believed to have a weakness for entertainment of that sort. One might take a man's life with little risk, but to take the means of it—his bacon, "dust," or mule—was crime of moment enough to justify the halter. In this instance "the performer on the tight-rope" had scarcely assumed position when the strange lad burst in among us with horror in his eyes and the bag of gold-dust held aloft.

"I took it!" he shouted. "Let him down! Don't make a murderer of me! I'll give it back!"

The man came to the ground like a shot, gasping and clutching at the noose, while we wheeled on the little thief as men turn on the snake. In our excitement and anger at being made to appear such hasty fools, we could have stamped him into the earth like a serpent.

"'Gin 'im the hemp!' yelled a miner. 'The thievin', slick-faced whelp! git rid on 'im!'

"In a trice the rope was round the boy's tender throat, but the spectacle was too much for me, and I sprang on a stump and made the first plea of my life. I have pleaded many times since for men's lives, and have pleaded that lives might be taken, but I have never, I think, been so stirred to language as by the girlish, horror-whitened face of that boy with the hateful noose under his chin. Well, in the end they let him go, stimulated by several parting kicks and cuffs as he fled up the trail through the pines.

"Two years passed away, and I began the practice of law in the town of Marysville. In July of that summer I was sent up into the Sierras to look after a client's interest in a mine that was being sold, and started back on the third day with seven thousand dollars in a belt about my body. There were several other passengers on the stage, and as a party we were jolly enough, save that those carrying large sums of money were perhaps a trifle apprehensive as we whirled through the beautiful solitudes. Nothing unusual occurred, however, until we were well down among the foot-hills; and the sight of the green floor of the valley had altogether reassured us, when, as we rounded a point of rocks, the horses were suddenly thrown back upon their haunches with fright, and the passengers thrown forward upon each other in confusion.

"'Don't shoot!' shouted the driver, widening his eyes; and as we got out of each other's arms and laps and looked ahead, we all made the same involuntary request. Some hollowed it, some whispered it, and some just made a little dry squeak in the larynx and looked it; but we were unanimous in the appeal, for just before us a rifle-barrel was protruding through the foliage of a bush that stood close upon the road, with a pair of glowing eyes and a furry, wild-looking figure behind it. Gentlemen you may not believe me, but candidly, the hole in tha gun looked as big as the mouth of a railroad tunnel! To this day I have the feeling that one could have walked directly into it without knocking one's hat off!

"'Put up your hands, gentlemen!' said the robber, in a ringing, high-keyed voice.

"We did so. In fact most of us had our hands already up to keep the bullets off.

"'Get down in line and lay your money on that big rock!' came the command.

"We all got down very readily, and began depositing our valuables on the rock, the hole in the rifle all the while seeming to grow larger and come nearer.

"'The gentleman in the drab hat will please not leave anything,' sang out the voice.

"Instantly every man snatched off his hat and stared at it as if it were inhabited by a hornet. Mine was the only headgear of the sort among the party, and I looked at the figure behind the brush in questioning astonishment. I had been tugging at my belt, with my eyes upon the gaping end of the rifle, when the command came, and after looking at my hat and glancing at the rifle, I resumed my endeavors to get the belt loose from about my body. I felt that I could not trust my ears under the circumstances; besides, the bit of gold-stuffed skin which had seemed so precious but five minutes before had suddenly become the most valueless thing I had ever worn.

"'Keep your belt, sir, get up on the stage, and turn your face to the left,' rang out the voice, peremptorily.

"I was obedient; a child could not have been more so. In five minutes all of the passengers were in their seats. The robber cried 'Drive on; hold your faces to the left, and don't look back!' and away he flew, leaving a little heap of bags and belts on the rock, and every man holding his face to the left as if sitting for his portrait. When we were well out of the highwayman's sight, we all drew our revolvers and called on the driver to halt, but when he began pulling up the horses we all thought we had best drive on to town. We could send out the sheriff; no doubt the woods were full of road-agents; it wouldn't be prudent for so few of us to venture back. Before we reached town, however, we grew more confident and composed, and some of the passengers began darkly scrutinizing me, and thought it exceedingly queer that the robbers—all now agreed that there were several—should have favored me so singularly. At first I was chagrined that I had not been robbed, the incident looked so compromisingly odd, and I was so entirely without means of explanation; but upon second thought, however, whatever the cause or outcome of the agent's partiality, I felt deeply grateful that I had not been ruined by the loss of my client's money.

"Two days afterward the supposed robber was captured and brought in. The incident was then lucid enough; it was the young fellow I had saved from the noose two years before. In his gratitude he had spared me, and I confess that I was a good deal stirred as I contemplated him. A more unusual picture than he made as he stood manacled at the door of the big log jail I believe I have never seen. His slim form was clothed from top to toe in spotted fawn-skin, his black hair lay on his shoulders in a curling mass, he was deadly pale, and never once lifted his eyes from the ground, or spoke. The pain and shame that shone in his delicate face smote me with pity, and after he was locked up I went to my lodgings with a curious mixture of feelings.

"That evening the manager of the stage-line came to my room with a request that I should represent them in prosecuting the culprit. The thing shocked me, to turn upon him after his kindness seemed so cowardly and ungenerous. But I knew that he was guilty. Besides, a declension on my part, coupled with the robber's partiality, would surely look very strange. I consented, but spent a sleepless night over it. The face of the prisoner haunted me, appealed to me, and shamed and disturbed me. Could it be possible that his soft-eyed, effeminate fellow was wholly bad? I could not divest myself of the impression that there was a mystery about him; that in some way he was less or more than a common thief. In the morning, however, I set resolutely to work upon the case, but was a good deal astonished to find that not one of the passengers, or the driver, could positively identify the prisoner as the robber. Indeed, when I questioned my own memory closely I found that I was absolutely sure of little more than his eyes and the opening in the end of the gun-barrel. Still, at heart I was entirely sure of him; I could scarcely have given a clear reason for it, but I knew indubitably that the lad who stood among us by the Feather River with a noose about his neck, the person behind the rifle in the foot-hills, and the stripling who stood in irons by the jail door were one. His detention or liberty, therefore, lay with me; his destiny rested in my hands. If I went upon the stand and made oath that I recognized him, his kindness to me would be the corroborating evidence, and would convict him. It seemed hard and unfeeling to turn what was good in the youth to his own hurt, to crush him with his one act of nobility; but surely justice must be done; such a character could not be spared to please a sentiment.

"The next morning I went to see him. When I entered his cell he was pacing to and fro with his eyes upon the floor, and, though it could not be less than fatal to his case to recognize me, he frankly put his hand in mine and thanked me for the old favor I had done him. I was dumfounded, and sharply read his face for signs of aberration, but the eye was entirely sane of expression, and the countenance singularly intelligent.

"'I am astonished,' I said, 'that you should care to remember me after the affair up in the hills. I am now retained to prosecute you; I fear I shall not be so good a friend as formerly.'

"He began moving to and fro again, with his eyes upon the floor. At the moment of our meeting his face had lit up with a curiously confused and eager expression, but as my words fell it ran empty of light.

"'I am sorry,' he said, 'but ingratitude, I believe, is not one of my sins.'

"I sat down and contemplated him for a moment in silence. The odd beauty of the boy and his look of suffering touched me; there was that about him, too, an invisible bound, which I felt it impossible to pass as with the common criminal.

"'I have undertaken the prosecution with reluctance,' I said. 'Believe me, I would rather be of service to you than otherwise; but it seemed my duty. If you have any means of exonerating yourself, and truthful resource with which to convince me that you are not sulpable, I should be deeply gratified.'

"He paused and looked at me curiously for a moment, then continued pacing feverously to and fro. He seemed weighing me, and perhaps the chances of escape.

"'I have no resource but to tell you of myself,' he began, with flushed cheeks and quickening breath. 'I am the youngest son of a once rich but now reduced family in the East, but of what name, town, or State, I cannot justly say. From childhood I have been, in certain hours, capable of, nay, driven to, theft. An influence strong and indescribable, compels me to it. In compulsion it is not unlike the craving of an inebriate for drink, but the thirst is entirely of the mind. Oh, sir, you cannot possibly know how sweet and terrible it is! As I yield to it, all my faculties grow finely clear; in the act a pleasure fills me like the first giddy delight of drunkenness; in the end I am left with a lingering, bitter disgust, removable only by the return of that which I have stolen. For days, and sometimes weeks, I feel it growing within me; then, as if my nature at inception had been formed with this ineradicable atom of evil at its centre, it breaks and submerges my moral sense as with some malign, delightful intoxicant. Oh, sir, in this I am not sane. Believe me, I am only fit for pity.'

"He turned toward me with a trembling movement of appeal. 'I am far from home,' he said. 'I left it secretly that my parents might not suffer longer from my misdeeds. I hoped to be to them as one dead, or to escape my malady by acquiring wealth, by removing all incentive to theft, here in the land of gold. But it has only ended in disaster. Oh, sir, I am not what I seem. Give me mercy without asking more.'

"I was much moved. Young as he seemed, there were threads of gray in his flowing hair, and many infinitely tiny lines in his face. Surely he had suffered, with this invisible deformity, and had fought against its growth. I thought of his mother; she must be beautiful; and his father, too, must be of fine exterior. But what evil acts, or train of acts, in the past had sent this blot forward into the child's nature? Had it come down to him through a long chain of hearts, the seed of some old crime transmitted from parent to child for generations, but undeveloped until it found lodgment in his breast? If so, through which of his parents had it entered him? Or was it only an evil result, unaccountably emitted in the contact of two ordinarily innocent natures, like poison arising from the uniting of certain harmless chemicals? In either case was he individually to blame?

"'Where have you been living?' I asked, at last.

"'Up in the mountains,' he said; and the cloud in his face shifted oddly, and his step quickened excitedly.

"'I am rich,' he broke out, after a time. 'I had no need to steal. After you saved my life two years ago I went back in the mountains and built me a little cabin, deep in a gulch among the pines. I had sworn never to go near mankind and be tempted again. Until three days ago I had not seen a human face since then. I had many struggles with myself there in the solitude. At times I was all but demented with longing to commit theft, but now, it may be, I shall escape it only through the grave, and perhaps not then. Oh, sir, if that had been a certain means I should have freed myself long since! But a fear, a dread, of what might follow after death, has held me back; I could not take the hazard.

"'My region was a wild one, deep in the mountains, and I lived upon berries, game, fish, and bread made of mortared acorns. I worked hard to keep off loneliness, but at last my labor, the very means by which I saved myself from madness, brought me fresh disaster. I found a mine, riches, that through which I hoped to enter into happiness, but from which, as for many another, sprang sharper conditions and heavier things to bear. It fell toward the close of my first year of solitude. I was "panning" the bed of the rivulet that came down through my little grove, and near its head I came upon a bowl in the rocks, with its whole bottom covered with gold. It was like sand, and in one day I "panned" it clean and was rich. The next day I found more, some thousands, in a basin just above it, but could find none after that. Then I was seized with a desire to come back among men; at times it was like the fierce hunger of a starving man; it shook my resolution, but I dared not come. I was not afraid that my gold would be stolen from me, but that I still might steal from others. How I suffered! I kept it hidden in a cave near the cabin, in a long pouch made of deerskin, and every day, and often many times a day, I went there and struggled over it. When I took it up to go back to the homes of men, I saw a felon's cell before me, shame, disgrace, and perhaps death, and put it back again. Once I had no sleep for three nights, and toward morning of the third night I got up, snatched the pouch from the cave, and ran along the mountain-side and pitched it over a precipice into a thicket. For three weeks I left it there, then I could stand it no longer, and after two days of anxious hunting I found and returned it to the cave. I rested easier after that for a time, then my trouble came on again, and I took the pouch far up the gulch and hid it, so that when the fit came on me to go back to the world I should consume a whole day in going after it. That was of help to me, but the hours went wearily enough; I could not work, I did not care for food, my shady gorge was hateful to me. Oh, to remain there alone in the mountains, with the warm social blood of youth in my veins! To bear the awful solitude, when voices and faces seemed so sweet! To live as rudely as a savage, with the heart forever haunted by a thousand well-remembered luxuries! To lead an empty life, to drink the very dregs of penury, with the means of pleasure and plenty close at hand! Ah, that was hard indeed! There were hours when it seemed that my reason would leave me, and once I brought the pouch down as far as the mouth of the gulch; but fear of disaster fell upon me; I felt what once you saw, a noose about my neck; it strangled me, and I fled up the gorge into the mountain and flung the gold into its hiding-place and left it.

"'After that I was more contented for a a time, but a great loneliness dragged at my heart, and I wandered about the tops of the mountains looking toward the west. At last I found a peak from which the valley of the Sacramento could be seen, and often when the day was clear I climbed the mountain to its top, and there, sitting in the sky, I watched the filmy flickering of the distant river, the faint lights upon the yellow fields of wheat, and the floating isles of smoke that hid the far-off towns. The sight was like balm to my wounds; it gave me strength and comfort; but that, too, while seeming to brace me at first against myself, helped me to fall. The old burning to commit theft came back with the sight of human habitation; it wrenched me from my resolution. I brought the gold down to the cave by the cabin again; there I made a stand against my weakness. For a week I was tossed and buffeted; then one night my moral strength broke clean away; it went like a dam before a torrent; and I leaped up from my bed of skins, snatched my rifle from the wall, caught the pouch from the cave, and fled down and out through the darkness, and always down, down, toward the homes of men. Oh, sir, you can never know what a sense of strength and lightness carried me! Worlds had rolled off me, and like some freshly created form of life I seemed running along the air. I was mad; a sort of clear-headed drunkenness controlled me. I hurried on through the remainder of the night, scarcely feeling, and caring nothing for, the pouch of gold that tugged at my waist; and still on without thought of food, or drink, or weariness, nearly all day. Then just before sunset I saw the stage down on the road below me. A thrill of delight shot through me at the sight. For a moment I seemed swimming clear of earth in a hot, rich-smelling air; then suddenly my faculties became strangely clear; I leaped into the ravine, thrust my rifle through the boughs, and stopped the stage; you know the rest.'

"I sat and stared at him for a time in utter astonishment. His story, in many ways, seemed the most pitiful and curious I had ever heard. At last I found my voice:

"'Where is the gold the passengers left on the rocks?' I said.

"He continued pacing to and for for a little space as if he had not heard, then stopped and fixed his big, sorrowful eyes upon me.

"'I will produce it the moment I am given freedom,' he said, 'and with it five hundred dollars in 'dust' for each man I wronged by the robbery. I do not want it; but if I am prosecuted and imprisoned it shall never see the light; never, though I may be torn limb from limb! There are others whom I think of, who will suffer that I still live and am disgraced. Oh, sir, I have told you the truth; I am not responsible!'

"I rose and wrung his hand in silence and went out. I saw certain of the authorities and told them the young man's story in part. I urged the fairness of his proffer, and the necessity of accepting it so that the original treasure and the 'smart' money he had promised might not be lost; that the penalty he had volunteered to pay for the crime—a thing we were not at all sure of establishing—was equal to a generous fine, and that, in my judgment, policy and that mercy which youth should surely find justified us in being generous in his case. After two days of parleying I won their consent to take the culprit to the mountains under guard, and if he produced the gold and the sum he had promised for each man wronged, to set him free. So the next morning we rode off together to the hills with two armed men following at our heels. near noon we dismounted, and he led us up a long and tortuous ravine into a heavy wood. Presently we came to a great wall of shattered stone that formed one side of the gorge, and out of a fissure of this he took the valuables and laid them on a rock. He had spoken scarcely a word through all the morning, but now the strained, determined look his face had worn melted into something like a smile as I checked off the packages from a list I had brought.

"'They are all here,' I said, looking up.

"He bowed his head, turned about, and brought a heavy pouch from another fissure. I took a small pair of balances from my coat, and he weighed out three thousand dollars in "dust" for the six men he had robbed. Then pouring a handful of the gold upon a bit of cloth he twisted it into a knot and thrust it into his breast, and handed the pouch to me. Not knowing what he intended, I took it, and stood wondering what would happen next. After looking me in the eye a moment with one of the most inexplicable expressions of countenance I have ever witnessed, he turned about, and going along the wall a little way, lifted his rifle from a little fissure and turned toward me again.

"'Keep what I have given you until I return,' he said. 'I cannot save myself while I have it in my possession. Good-by!' and before I could comprehend the significance of what he had said, he sprang into the undergrowth and vanished.

"I shouted for the men to stop him, and we rushed in among the brambles, but he had gone as into the air.

A GOOD STORY FREE

THE DREAM THAT CAME TRUE.

This story is sent free to every reader of this paper. The story will interest every one who longs to own a home in the West and be able to pass their remaining years without being dependent upon others. The West is full of golden opportunities. There is Butte Valley, California, the land of great trees, great valleys, great agricultural yields, and great everything. This great valley invites the poor, the moderately well-off, and the hard-working middle classes to come to its bosom, and buy land on easy payments and get great harvests. Why should a man toil his years away in a factory or at work for small pay? Why should a man grub away renting a farm in the East and making only a bare living when for a small sum he may own a splendid farm and not only make a good living but put money away each year. This is YOUR opportunity. Just send for this book, it costs you nothing, and it shows you the great opportunity you have to get on in the world. Every reader of this paper has the chance. If you don't send for the book you are not fair to yourself or those of your family who depend on you. Butte Valley opens its arms and says "Come." The Golden West wants you to come and share its prosperity. You know persons who have gone out West and made fortunes from its productive soil. Their stories are like dreams to you, but the dream is true. You can have the chance. Just write for the booklet that shows you the way. It seems like a dream to hear of the wonders of Butte Valley, yet everything stated about this great country is true. We want every reader of this paper to send for the story of the "Dream That Came True." It costs you nothing and we will gladly send it to every one who writes. Simply write a note like this: "Please send me a copy of the story of the 'Dream That Came True.'" Sign your name and address plainly and address your letter to

E. L. LOMAX, 1324 Farnam St., OMAHA, NEB.

"That was more than a quarter of a century ago; the pouch of dust lay in my keepink twenty years. All inquiry in the East, and all search here by the Pacific, failed to find him. An utter mystery, a strange enigma, he came and went. A thousand times I tried to weigh and analyze his conduct, to measure the moral depth to which he sank and the height to which he rose, to comprehend his weakness and his strength of will, his bravery and the keenness of his fear, and ever at the bottom of all my sifting I found the feeling he was not of the fibre of which men are made, but of something finer and more capable of pain.

"At last the explanation came. Eight years ago, near twilight on an August day, a sister came quietly into my office. I should not have felt more strange, I think, had a spirit stood before me. I have never seen so clear a face elsewhere, a form where the sense of earthliness was so refined away. Her flesh had the effect of white wax, yet was wonderfully instinct with spirit; the soul of the woman seemed to illuminate her to the very skin; her hair lying across her brows like snow, and the soft quiet of her eyes, all framed in and accentuated by the dark habit of her order, gave me a sense of human purity I had never realized before.

"'I have come for it at last,' she said.

"Her voice was gentleness itself, her eyes grew limpid, and a faint smile, like a soft radiance, lit up her face. It was my friend of the foot-hill episode! The intelligence shot through my mind like a beam of light falling through cloudy water. For a moment my tongue was tied with amazement; I pored on her face in questioning wonder; it seemed in the haze of my astonishment like the face of Christ. His look was so in it—the look which all men dream but never see—that I trembled like one who sees a vision. I knew without the help of words whence the victory had fallen, what spirit-purpose growing in her had pushed the evil forth at last and healed her.

"I put out my hand toward her. 'Tell me of it,' I faltered.

"She laid her clear hand in mine a moment, then stood still, like one who composes the heart before a prayer.

"'It came from Christ—the help,' she said. 'I found Him in the solitude. For six years He struggled with me in my lonely gorge, but could not make me clean. I fasted until the winds swayed me like a spirit; a thousand times I prayed in the dark cave where my gold had lain, but prayed in vain. Then once, tottering from the cavern after a prayer, I fell and swooned, or seemed to swoon, and saw Him as clearly as I ever saw the trees at noon, and all His ceaseless care in doing good, and knew, somehow, that even He, walking in man's flesh, kept evil off through holy uses of His powers, and that this lesson of His love was more to man than even the wonder of His death, and that he who would be free from the dark disease called sin must cleanse and heal himself through doing good. This I saw, or seemed to see, and, true or false, it made me whole. For fourteen years I've sought no face but that of suffering, kissed no lips but those of pain, held no hand but that of sickness, toiled only for the straying and the poor, praying Christ for succor; and the sore defect of nature which you saw in me, like a tumor in the flesh which heals of healthful living, long since failed of nourishment and passed away. God is good!'

"She raised her lustrous eyes and thin hands heavenward, whispering the last words reverently. My eyes were wet.

"'The gold will build a home for those who sin,' she said; 'a place for men to heal their hearts of evil in.'

"I turned and brought the dusty pouch from out my safe and laid it in her arms. She held me for a moment with her grateful eyes, then stooped and kissed my hand, and whispered softly:

"'God is good!' and as the twilight folded went her way."

BAD DREAMS

Frequently Due to Coffee Drinking.

One of the common symptoms of coffee poisoning is the bad dreams that spoil what should be restful sleep. A man who found the reason says:

"Formerly I was a slave to coffee. I was like a morphine fiend, could not sleep at night, would roll and toss in my bed and when I did get to sleep was disturbed by dreams and hobgoblins, would wake up with headaches and feel bad all day, so nervous I could not attend to business. My writing looked like bird tracks, I had sour belchings from the stomach, indigestion, heartburn and palpitation of the heart, constipation, irregularity of the kidneys, etc.

"Indeed, I began to feel I had all the troubles that human flesh could suffer, but when a friend advised me to leave off coffee I felt as if he had insulted me. I could not hear of the idea, it had such a hold on me and I refused to believe it the cause.

"But it turned out that no advice was even given at a more needed time for I finally consented to try Postum and with the going of coffee and the coming of Postum all my troubles have gone and health has returned. I eat and sleep well now, nerves steadied down and I write a fair hand (as you see), can attend to business again and rejoice that I am free from the monster coffee."

Ten day's trial of Postum in place of coffee will bring sound, restful, refreshing sleep. "There's a Reason." Read, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. Some physicians call it "a little health classic."

The Reason.

Lady Visitor—I am sorry to see you here, my young friend. You appear to have had a good education.

Convict—Well, madam, I have been through Trinity College.

Lady Visitor—Is it possible?

Convict—Yes; that's the reason I'm here. They caught me as I was going through.

HOME LIFE.

BY MRS. M. A. KIDDER.

If the children find not love within,
  And a golden chain to bind it,
Of words of cheer and kisses dear,
  They'll go outside to find it.
If home lacks joys, our girls and boys
  Will seek them elsewhere, mind it.

For the blood is warm in growing limbs,
  And leaps to tuneful measures,
While hearts in rhyme, at childhood's time,
  Beats high for wholesome pleasures—
Right merry feet, and voices sweet,
  Have they, our household treasures!

If the fire burns low, and ashes lie
  Broadcast, as one might sow it,
With naught complete, or fair, or neat,
  The little ones first know it—
A child's young heart has at the start
  The instinct of the poet.

Then let us fan the home blaze high,
  And set the place in order,
Decking the rooms with rosy blooms
  And heart's-ease for the border,
Taking good care to match each snare
  And bar out grim disorder.

Thus may we keep our jewels safe—
  The children God hath given—
And train them right, in paths of light,
  Each day of all the seven,
Till by and by, beyond the sky,
  We find the gate of heaven.

A RAMBLE AMONG THE STARS.

We admire ourselves so much that it is no easy matter for us to comprehend what atoms we are in the universe. Nor is it at all flattering to our self-love to contemplate the spectacle of our own insignificance. Nevertheless, such a contemplation may be wholesome medicine, and we of this self-glorifying twentieth century may do well to take liberal doses.

We talk of the annihiliating time and space with our telegraph and railroads, and yet with all our big words we are utterly unable to give more than the faintest conception of all time and all space, eternity and infinity.

Let us fence off a small—very small corner of space—and make an effort to comprehend what it contains. For convenience we will take the little corner in which this earth of ours is spinning. And now, if this be the first time you have taken a starry ramble, accept the writer's advice and keep a firm hold on your senses, for they may go off in the universal whirl before you know it.

Stand away from the earth and look at your solitary moon. How it spins! And how it swings around the earth! And there is the earth spinning, too; and there it swings around the sun, dragging the mad little moon with it. And a pretty circle it makes! A circle, or, more properly, an ellipse about one hundred and eighty million miles in diameter. Make a little circle on your thumb-nail. That circle is larger in your comprehension than the circle the earth makes in space when compared with all space.

Besides the earth, there are Mercury, Venus, Jupiter, and the rest of the planets, with all their moons, all spinning and swinging around the sun just as the wooden horses in the merry-go-round, and making just about as much commotion among themselves and just as little in the realm of space as the merry-go-round at Coney Island does on our globe.

And then there is the sun actually spinning, too! More than that, it is tearing along like a wild horse at the end of a rope. Whizz it goes, dragging the earth and all the rest of the little balls with all their moons after it. It is making its circle, and such a circle!

Man annihilates time and space! What, then does the sun do? Look at its circle—it is all in the little corner we fenced off—and I will give you some figures by which you can calculate its size. It is not large. A silver ten-cent piece is larger to us than the sun's circle, compared to all space. The sun is whirling along with his whirling worlds at the rate of thirty-four million miles a year, and if he keeps on at the same pace he will have made one complete revolution in a little over eighteen million years.

Fancy, if you can, not only our sun with all its revolving worlds, but countless other suns with vastly greater number of satellite worlds and comets, all whirling around the grand central sun, and you have some idea of the little corner we fenced off, and which we may call our universe.

If you care to see the central sun, look in the Eastern sky about this time for a little group of stars formed into a shape not unlike a ladle. That group is called the Pleiades, and at about the central point of the cluster shines Alcyone. Alcyone is the far-off, mysterious sun about which we are all chasing each other.

And now, if you care to climb over the fence, you may see that Alcyone, too, is no better than we. It, too, obeys the call and spins and whirls like the meanest moon among the giddy throng behind. But you are a trifle giddy yourself, no doubt, so we will not follow Alcyone.

What a poor idea we must have of distance and time even now that we have been walking among the stars and talking so glibly of millions of miles and millions of years. We judge of things we do not know by those we do. We are, after all, not much in advance of Cetywayo, the Zulu king, who, when asked how far he thought the sun was, replied: "About ten days' journey." That was very far to the savage. How stupid he was, was he not?

How much better are we? We say ninety-five million miles, and are satisfied because we have put it in figures; but in reality we have no more idea of the distance from the figures than Cetywayo himself. But there is a way to gain some idea of the distance. We know that we could not dodge a ball from a rifle a quarter of a mile away. At any rate, I would not care to take the chances. Yet that same rifle-ball, going at the same rate of speed, would take about twelve years to reach the sun.

How we annihilate space in our express trains! Suppose a train were to move at the rate of fifty miles an hour, it would take it about two hundred years to reach the sun.

TAKE A YEAR TO PAY

WE'LL ship you a single article or furnish your home complete and give you from *twelve to fourteen months in which to pay for your purchases.* You enjoy the full use of the home furnishings while paying for them.

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We furnish homes on credit all over the United States. We charge absolutely nothing for this Credit accommodation—*no interest—no extras of any kind.*

22 Great Stores. This great concern is positively the largest home furnishing institution on earth and handles more goods than *any* other store or combination of furniture stores in America, none excepted. It enjoys buying advantages which enable us to sell you home furnishing goods at *lower* prices than *any other firm in the business.*

Satisfaction or your money back. This concern has been known since its beginning, 'way back in 1855, as a concern of *absolute and unquestioned reliability.* You have our reputation of 52 years standing and our absolute guarantee, backed by a capital of two million dollars, to insure you of thorough and complete satisfaction in all your dealings with us.

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SEND US 75c and we will ship you this **SOLID OAK ROCKER, No. A 81,** extra large and massive, beautifully carved, upholstered in Nantucket leather, comfortable spring back, back tufted, wide leather straps and oxydized brass buttons, ruffled front. It's a magnificent rocker—an unmatchable value—*a world beater at the price.*

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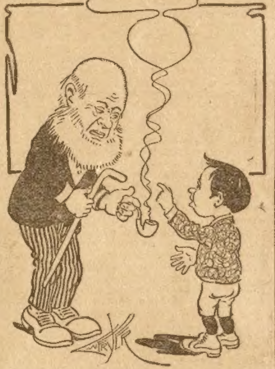
HARTMAN FURNITURE & CARPET CO.
223-225-227-229 Wabash Ave., Chicago, U. S. A.

To gain even the very faintest idea of the distance of some of the stars from us, however, we must give up rifle-bullets and express trains as too slow, or we shall be swamped in figures.

We must use the speed of light to reckon with. Light travels about one hundred and eighty-five thousand miles a second. Grasp that if you can. Now take Alpha Centauri, the nearest of the fixed stars, and how long do you suppose it would take such a nimble mover as light to come here from there? Three years! But that is nothing. There are some stars so far away that it would take light five hundred thousand years to make the journey to us.

There! If you do not feel insignificant now, you must indeed be the grandest production of this great twentieth century.

Then He Ran.



Oswald—Y' must 'a' had yer hair planted upside down, Unky Ulmer.

Uncle Ulmer—Haow's that?

Oswald—It's all a-growin' down through yer face.

M. D. Hackman.

Raymond Hitchcock was recently invited as the guest of honor to the Country Club, about five miles outside of San Francisco, after the performance. As Mr. Hitchcock knew from previous experience that a cabman would ask a fortune to carry him out to the club, he looked up the address of a physician near the theatre, and after the close of the show he went around and rang the bell. The doctor opened the door personally, and Hitchcock said:

"Doctor, you're wanted immediately out near the Country Club. Can you come right away?"

"Certainly, sir. Just step inside a moment while I telephone for my auto. We'll be there in a jiffy."

It was a good five miles to the Country Club. Just beyond stood a cluster of suburban homes.

"The yellow house to the left there," said Hitchcock, as he got out of the machine. "By the way, I forgot to ask you the amount of your fee."

"Four dollars," said the doctor.

The comedian peeled off four one-dollar bills and passed them to the doctor.

"That will be all, thank you, doctor. None of those pirate hackmen would take me out here for less than $15."

Wheat-Straw Principle.

"Bimper, I don't see how it is that your girls all marry off as soon as they get old enough, while none of mine can marry."

"O, that's simple enough! I marry my girls off on the wheat-straw principle."

"But what is that principle? I have never heard of it before."

"Well, I used to grow a good deal of wheat, and it puzzled me to know how to get rid of the straw. Nothing would eat it, and it was a great bother to me. At last I thought of a plan. I stacked my straw nicely, and built a railing round it. My cattle, of course, concluded that it was something good, and at once tore down the fence and began to eat the straw.

"I drove them away and put up the railing a few times, but the more I drove them away the more anxious they became to eat the stray. After this had been repeated a few times the cattle determined to eat the straw, and eat it they did, every bit of it. As I said, I marry my girls off on the same principle. When a young man I don't like begins calling on my girls I encourage him in every way I can. I tell him to come as often and stay as late as he pleases, and I take pains to hint to the girls that I think they'd better set their caps at him. It works first-rate. He doesn't make many calls, for the girls treat him as coolly as they can.

"But when a young fellow that I like comes round—a man that I think would suit me for a son-in-law—I don't let him make many calls before I give him to understand that he isn't wanted at my house. I tell the girls, too, that they should not have anything to do with him, and give them orders never to speak to him again. The plan works first-rate. The young folks begin to pity each other; and the next thing you know is that they are engaged. When I see that they are determined to marry, I always give in, and pretend to make the best of it. That's the way I manage it."—Rehoboth Sunday Herald.

FREE DEAFNESS CURE.

A remarkable offer made by one of the leading ear specialists in this country. Dr. Branaman offers to all applying at once two full months' medicine free to prove his ability to cure permanently Deafness, Head Noises and Catarrh in every stage. Address Dr. G. M. Branaman, 1283 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo.

The Sad Sea.

The thin, pale man in the large bathing suit, standing knee-deep in the water, sighed.

"Why," we asked, "are you so sad?"

"Alas," he answered, "the sea is the grave of my first wife."

Our lip curled superciliously.

"But you married again," we murmured.

"Yes," said he, "and my second wife won't go near the water."

A Dainty Little Maid.

Every one ought to have her. She is dressed in pretty colors and changes the color of her skirt herself when it is going to rain. She indicates when it is wise to take an umbrella or when you can do without. She is the simplest and best of barometers. She is an ornament, a good seller for agents, a pretty gift, a good business souvenir and useful to any one. She or one of her sisters comes postpaid with full directions for only 10 cents. W. P. Randolph & Co., 78 Dearborn St., Chicago.

His Favorite.

Cast not your pearls before the swine;
  They'll view the gems with scorn.
To make a big hit with the pig
  Toss him a load of corn.

Ladies, Preserve Your Youthful Appearance.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results.

Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

Just Possible.

"A little learning is a dangerous thing," quoted the moralizer.

"Yes," rejoined the demoralizer, "and too much is more so."

Map of the World 25 Cents.

A beautiful map, valuable for reference printed on heavy paper, 42x63 inches, mounted on rollers, edges bound in cloth, showing our new island possessions, the Trans-Siberian Railway, Pacific Ocean, cables, railway lines, and other features of Japan, China, Manchuria, Korea and the Far East. Sent on receipt of 25 cents in stamps by W. B. Kniskern, P. T. M., Chicago & North-Western Ry., Chicago, Ill.

THE FATAL MILLIONS.

BY EMMA HOWARD WIGHT.

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CHAPTER VIII.

YOU ARE THE ONLY WOMAN I HAVE LOVED.

Ten months later. At the window of the drawing-room Gratia Caspard stood gazing into the street with something of the eagerness of a child. The passersby stared up admiringly at the lovely, fair face and glittering golden head. Winston came by the window, lifted his hat, and ran lightly up the steps. A moment later he entered the drawing-room.

Gratia turned to meet him with a smile.

"Oh, Mr. Winston, I can't tell you how happy I am today," she cried, childishly.

Winston smiled indulgently. To him she had never seemed other than a beautiful child.

"Why are you so particularly happy today?" he asked.

"Why, I am going to the opera tonight."

"Are you so very fond of the theater?"

"I have never been but twice in all my life," she replied, plaintively. "We were so poor, you know, mamma and I, that we had very few pleasures. So you can understand what it means to me to have such a great one to anticipate. Aren't you coming with us, Mr. Winston? Mr. Dungard has gotten a box, so there's room for all."

"Thank you, no. I have an engagement for this evening."

She glanced up at him archly.

"Do you know I believe that you have a sweetheart."

Winston felt himself color under the laughing, innocent eyes. It was rather a relief that his brother entered at that moment and Winston took that opportunity to leave the room.

"I was just telling Mr. Winston how happy I was at the prospect of going to the opera this evening," Gratia said.

Horace Dungard's stern, cold face softened wonderfully as he looked down upon the girl's beautiful face.

"If going to the theater makes you so happy you shall be happy very often," he said.

"You are so good to me," she murmured, looking up at him gratefully. "And I shall never be able to repay you."

A smile that had something of sadness crossed his lips.

"Your bright presence in this gloomy house more than repays me," he said. "And you—are you happy? This is not a very bright life for a young girl."

She laid her small white hand upon his arm as she replied:

"Do you not know? I am perfectly happy. What more could I wish for?"

"Life has much more in store for you," said Horace Dungard, and he sighed as he turned away.

Toward the box in which Gratia sat with Horace and Mary Dungard many lorgnettes were leveled, while the girl herself seemed entirely unconscious of the admiration she excited. She wore a simple white tulle gown which left bare her exquisite neck and arms and nothing in the way of ornament save a large bunch of violets on her breast.

There was one man in the audience whose eyes devoured her beauty, even while he frowned darkly.

"It will not do for me to delay any longer," Herbert Edmondson murmured to himself. "Men will go mad over that beauty of hers and I may lose her. If she were a shade less lovely I would never be so mad as to take upon myself the shackles of matrimony, but she has bewitched me and she must be mine."

At the close of the first act he made his way to the millionaire's box. He seated himself beside Gratia apparently oblivious of the cold reception accorded him by Horace Dungard.

"You appeared to be enjoying the opera?" Edmondson said.

"Oh, so much," she replied, lifting her wonderful dusky eyes to his face. There was the faintest touch of color in her white rose cheeks, and he thrilled anew at her loveliness. "Isn't it all wonderful?"

"Gratia," he whispered, bending over her until his lips almost touched her white dimpled shoulder, "there is something I must say to you and soon. I will come to you tomorrow morning at about eleven o'clock."

"Oh, very well," she replied, a little petulantly, and, though he watched her keenly, he could not discover the slightest touch of self-consciousness, and wondered, as he had wondered many times before, if she was as innocent as she appeared. "Please go away now,' she added, "the curtain will soon go up and you disturb me."

Herbert went back to his seat, but he paid very little attention to what was taking place on the stage. Gratia absorbed his thoughts and he sat watching the peerless face with passionate eyes until the curtain fell upon the last act and the girl left the box leaning on Horace Dungard's arm.

Herbert Edmondson's heart was beating heavily when Gratia came into the drawing-room where he awaited her upon the following morning.

"How very punctual you are," she exclaimed, as she sank down into a chair and looked up at him a little inquiringly. "I can't imagine what you can have to say to me that is of so much importance."

He came and stood beside her chair.

"Gratia, can it be really possible that you have no idea what I am about to say to you? That you have never guessed what my feelings for you are?"

She started slightly, flushed, and he saw that she understood. This awakening to self-consciousness on her part seemed to add fuel to his burning passion.

"I love you," he whispered, hoarsely, as he bent over her. "Gratia, will you be my wife?"

"Your wife?" she murmured, shrinking from him. "Oh, no, I cannot. That is impossible!"

"Why is it impossible?" he asked, his breath coming heavily.

"Because I haven't even thought of you in that way, and I do not love you."

"But I am quite willing to marry you without your loving me," he urged, desperately. "Think a moment. I am rich; I can give you all those things that women most love."

Her red lips curled contemptuously.

"You wish to buy me. But I have no wish to sell myself."

"And so," he cried, with white lips, "you prefer living upon the charity of a man upon whom you have not the shadow of a claim to becoming my wife?"

She arose and faced him defiantly.

"Whatever I may choose to do is no concern of yours," she said, quietly. "I do not think there is anything further to be said between you and me so I will bid you good-morning."

She started to move toward the door, but he placed himself before her. His face was livid and there was an ugly look in his eyes.

"You have driven me mad," he said, "and I am not a man to be thwarted with safety."

The scorn deepened on her marvelous face.

"You are a coward," she said. "You have my answer; there is nothing on earth that would cause me to change it. Now let me pass."

With a muttered oath, he caught her in his arms, he lifted her face and kissed her roughly upon the lips again and again. She tried to cry out, she tried to struggle, but it was useless. The door suddenly opened and Horace Dungard appeared upon the threshold.

Edmondson threw the girl from him and strode from the room casting upon the banker a dark look of mingled fury and hatred, as he went by him. Horace made a movement as though to follow him when the sound of weeping caused him to pause. Gratia had thrown herself upon a couch and was sobbing bitterly. Horace crossed the room and bent over her.

"Don't cry like that, my child," he said, gently. "Won't you try to tell me what all this means? That scoundrel——" he paused, his face darkening ominously.

The girl struggled for calmness and, at length, sat up, her face pale and tear-stained, her lips quivering.

"He came here and asked me to marry him," she explained. "And when I refused, he grew very angry and said cruel things to me. And then—and then—oh, you saw——"

"The cur! the contemptible scoundrel! the coward!" murmured Horace Dungard.

"He—he was most cruel and unmanly," the girl went on, her voice trembling. "He taunted me with living upon your charity, Mr. Dungard."

Horace Dungard started.

"Forget all that he said," he cried, quickly. "It is beneath your notice, unworthy a further thought."

"But it is all true," she murmured. "I had not thought of it in that way before; you are so good, so kind, but, now, I realize that it is as Herbert Edmondson said."

Horace Dungard drew himself up and walked once or twice up and down the length of the room then paused again beside the couch where Gratia sat with her little white hands clasped together upon her lap, with a pathetic look of pain in her dusky eyes and her red lips drooping plaintively.

As she looked up at him, Horace Dungard took her hand gently in his.

"Gratia, will you be my wife?" he asked, quietly.

"Your wife?" she half whispered. Then, with a gesture of pain, she added, "Ah, I understand you ask me to marry you because you pity me."

Horace smiled half whimsically.

"My child, when a man of my age asks a beautiful young girl like you to marry him it is hardly likely to be pity which prompts him. Listen to me, Gratia. I am forty-six years of age and you are the first woman I have ever loved or desired to make my wife. You came into my life like a gleam of sunshine and everything grew brighter about me. I grew to love you with the first deep passion and tenderness of my life, but I never intended that you should know of that love. Your distress at the taunts of that scoundrel broke down my resolution. If you shrink from remaining with me as my adopted daughter, will you become my wife? You had better take time to consider this, my child, to think it over well."

"It isn't necessary for me to do that," she half whispered, and, as shyly she rested her golden head against his shoulder, with a little sigh, he understood.

CHAPTER IX.

MARRIED.

"Why, Winston, how grave you look," said Nesta, as Winston seated himself beside her after the first tender greeting was over. "Has anything happened?"

"Yes, something very extraordinary has happened," Winston replied grimly. "Prepare yourself for a great surprise, Nesta; Horace is engaged to be married."

"So your brother is going to marry Miss Caspard," Nesta remarked, without manifesting any surprise at all.

"How did you guess it was Gratia Caspard?"

"Why I always had a sort of idea that he would marry her."

"Such a thought never once occurred to me. I never believed that Horace would marry any one, much less a girl young enough to be his daughter. And why does she want to marry him? She is so childish and innocent and appears so devoted to Horace that it is difficult to believe that she is marrying him for his money, and, yet, he is hardly the sort of man to win the love of a young and beautiful girl."

"It is possible that she may love him," suggested Nesta. "She has every cause to be grateful to him and gratitude with some natures easily ripens into love."

"She certainly seems very fond of him," Winston again declared. "They are to be married the middle of June and are going on a bridal tour to Europe to be absent six months. Of this I am more than glad for Horace's absence will enable me to be more with you, dearest."

"Ah, I am glad, too," she murmured, and Winston drew her closer and for a little while there was silence.

They were both thinking of the little child that would be born to them with the blooming of the June roses. But to Winston there was always pain mingled with the thought of the child that must be born in secret and which he dare not acknowledge before the world. He was fated to learn later that the poverty he had feared was heaven compared with the woe and misery his deception would entail.

The weeks and months passed until the eve of Horace Dungard's wedding-day. In the afternoon Winston went out to the cottage. He found his wife lying upon a couch in the sitting-room very white and wan.

"Winston," she said, as he regarded her anxiously, "I had such a strange dream last night. Let me tell you about it. I thought I was hurrying along the street with a crowd of people who were all going to your brother's wedding. At length we came to a brownstone house with white steps and went in. Everywhere there were white flowers, roses and lilies and japonicas and the air was oppressive from their mingled perfume. Then I found myself alone in a large, half darkened room in the center of which was a coffin and beside the coffin crouched a woman with golden hair whose face was hidden in her hands. Then I heard a voice saying 'Behold the bride and the bridegroom.' The scene changed and I was in a large, bare looking room filled with a great crowd and they all seemed to be looking at me so strangely. An awful fear and horror took possession of me and I tried to hide my face from all those cruel eyes. I awoke shivering and sick."

"Surely, my dear, you have not allowed a dream to so disturb you?" said Winston. "You look really ill."

"I could not help it, Winston; you have no idea how vivid and horrible the dream was and how it affected me."

"You must forget it, dear; it was only a dream," said Winston, soothingly, but it was some time before he succeeded in doing away to some extent with the impression the dream had made upon Nesta. They both remembered that dream later and wondered if it were prophetic.

Horace Dungard and Gratia Caspard were married very quietly in the big gloomy church that the millionaire was in the habit of attending.

To that wedding Herbert Edmondson came an unbidden guest, impelled by a mad longing to look upon the face of the girl who had aroused within him a wild passion that he was powerless to overcome. He drank heavily, he plunged into all manner of excesses, but he could not forget and the haunting beauty of her face held and tortured him.

His face was livid and there were muttered curses on his lips as he listened to the words that made her the wife of another man, but, when she came down the aisle leaning upon her husband's arm, and he looked upon the lovely face beneath the wreath of orange blossoms, a feeling of despair seized upon him as he realized that she was lost to him forever.

"I hate her,' he muttered, as he left the church, heedless of the curious glances bent upon his white, wild face, 'and if it is ever in my power, I will repay her for the suffering she has caused me."

It was late in the evening when Winston went out to the cottage. As he entered the little hall, a white-capped nurse came forward to meet him. Winston stopped abruptly and his face paled.

The nurse smiled.

"Everything is all right, sir," she said. "You have a little daughter born this afternoon at four o'clock."

As Winston softly followed the nurse upstairs to his wife's bedroom, he was thinking that his child had come into the world at the very hour of his brother's marriage.

CHAPTER X.

HUGH DELAVAN.

Mrs. Contare stood at one end of her long drawing-room receiving her guests. She wore a gown of peach blossoms satin and point lace, which seemed particularly suited to her voluptuous blonde beauty, and the necklace of superb pearls about her throat was hardly whiter than the flesh against which it rested.

Alma Contare was married to a man fifty-four years of age, a grave, quiet man whose entire life was devoted to his business pursuits. Indeed it had been a source of wonder to many how he had ever found the time to woo and wed his beautiful young wife. But, that accomplished, Henry Contare had returned to his former mode of life leaving his wife to follow the bent of her own inclinations which took the form of an endless round of fashionable dissipation. Henry Contare trusted his wife as only an honest, clean-minded man trusts the woman he loves.

It was at Newport the previous summer that Alma Contare and Hugh Delavan, a young artist who had sprung suddenly into fame, met for the first time. It was not very long before their names began to be coupled for they were constantly together and, to all appearances, were mutually infatuated. When Mrs. Contare returned to New York in the fall, Delavan came also, establishing himself in a handsome suite of apartments in one of the fashionable studio buildings, and he and Mrs. Contare were as constantly together as they had been at Newport.

As she stood receiving her guests upon the evening in question, Alma Contare could hardly hide her restless impatience for Hugh Delavan had so far failed to appear. Suddenly, however, she saw him approaching and her heart beat quicker as it always did at the sight of the dark, handsome face, with its dreamy gray eyes and womanishly beautiful mouth, the lithe, graceful figure.

"You are late," she murmured, as he reached her side.

"Yes," he replied, "I am a little late." As he spoke his eyes wandered slowly over the crowded rooms.

"By the way, Mrs. Dungard, the young wife of Horace Dungard, is here tonight," said Mrs. Contare. "Have you seen her? You know every one raves over her beauty."

"Is she so very lovely?" Delavan asked, carelessly.

"Yes, she is undoubtedly lovely. But there she comes now with young Harry Chester."

Gratia was coming slowly toward them, leaning upon the arm of a good-looking young fellow about twenty-three years of age. She wore a gown of pale blue velvet with diamonds and sapphires in her short gold curls, on her arms and about her throat. She carried a great bunch of blue forget-me-nots and lilies-of-the-valley. As he looked at her Hugh Delavan's dreamy eyes lighted curiously and his lips whitened.

"Well, do you not think her beautiful?" Alma asked, as he did not speak.

"Beautiful?" he repeated. "Oh, yes, she is very beautiful." Then he turned to her with a feverish look in his eyes that caused her pulses to quicken. "Come, let us waltz," he said.

Later in the evening he was presented to Mrs. Dungard by Alma.

She looked at him with an interest which she did not attempt to conceal.

"I am so pleased to meet you, Mr. Delavan," she exclaimed, and at the sound of the sweet, half childish voice, he started slightly. "I have seen your last painting and admire it so much. Mr. Dungard has promised to buy it for me. Will you sell it to him?"

A slight flush rose in his face as he replied:

"I am sorry, but the painting is already sold."

Gratia pouted like a disappointed child.

"I am so sorry," she exclaimed. "Do you mind telling me who has been so fortunate as to secure the painting?"

As the artist hesitated perceptibly, Alma Contare smiled and said:

"I am that fortunate person, Mrs. Dungard."

"Indeed!" Gratia lifted her eyes and looked into Alma's face, beautiful, innocent eyes they were, but, under their gaze, the color deepened on Alma's cheek. "I really envy you," Gratia added. She then turned again to the artist. "Mr. Dungard is very anxious to have you paint my portrait, Mr. Delavan. I would like to introduce you to him."

"I shall be most happy," murmured Delavan, but it struck Alma, who had grown to know almost every expression of that handsome, mobile face, that Hugh Delavan was not pleased at the prospect of meeting the banker, Horace Dungard, and she felt very curious to learn why.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PORTRAIT.

Crowds of persons belonging to the smart set flocked to Hugh Delavan's studio to see the portrait of the beautiful Mrs. Dungard. It was more like an exquisite picture than a portrait. He had painted her sitting upon the broad seat of a low window from which a green lawn sloped to the banks of a river. Curtains of blue silk and lace were looped back from the window. Gratia's golden curly head was brought out vividly against the dark framework of the window. She wore a white silk empire gown, her neck and arms were bare and her small white hands rested lightly among some red roses on her lap.

Mrs. Contare was among the first to see the portrait. She stood regarding it in silence until Delavan grew impatient and said:

"Well, what do you think of it?"

She turned slowly away from the portrait and looked at him.

"It is very beautiful," she replied, "and marvelously well done, but I have never seen Mrs. Dungard look as you have painted her."

"Why, how do you mean?"

"I mean," she continued, with her eyes still upon his face which changed perceptibly at her words, "that there is a look of tenderness, I may venture to say, passion, in the eyes and about the lips that is certainly not the usual expression of Mrs. Dungard's face."

"I am sorry if I have failed to catch Mrs. Dungard's expression," he murmured, but she noted that he gave a half startled glance at the portrait. "I must confess that I thought I had done so."

She laughed, a low, significant laugh that brought a dark flush to his cheek.

"You perhaps allowed your imagination scope," she suggested, "or it is possible that you have seen that expression upon Mrs. Dungard's face."

He looked at her with a flash of anger in his gray eyes.

"What is it you wish to insinuate?" he asked.

She quivered under the anger in his eyes, the coldness of his voice.

"Pardon me," she murmured, tremulously, "I meant nothing."

He bowed, and, turning from the portrait, called her attention to a painting on which he was engaged. When he was alone, however, he went back to the portrait and stood gazing, with sombre eyes, upon the fair face which bore so incongruously upon its childish loveliness a woman's tenderness and passion. Once he caught up his brushes as though to blot out the face, only to throw them aside again. Then, suddenly, with a gesture of infinite yearning, he stretched out his arms toward the portrait.

"My darling, my darling!" he whispered, passionately, "you are so beautiful that even your painted loveliness maddens me. I could pray like Pygmalion to endow the work of my own hands with life, if only for a few moments in which I might hold you in my arms and kiss your lips but once."

He sighed deeply, his arms fell to his sides, but still he stood gazing upon the portrait. Then, as the studio grew dusky in the twilight his imagination ran riot and it seemed to him that it was a living, breathing woman who sat there with the tender eyes and passionate mouth. He fancied that he could see the white bosom stirred by her breathing; the lovely painted thing that had grown to perfection under his hand seemed endowed with life.

"Gratia, my love, my darling!" he cried, again stretching out his arms, but his hands came in contact with the canvas and he started back with a moan that was half a curse.

"I must be going mad," he muttered.

CHAPTER XII.

"WHY SHOULD I SPARE HIM?"

In a private dining-room at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, three persons were seated at dinner. They were Richard Dunting, Clara and her husband. Clara Dunting had met Abel Rostarn, an elderly Scotchman, with an immense rent-roll, in Paris and made up her mind to marry him. Anna watched with amusement, Dick with disgust, her efforts to ensnare the elderly, unprepossessing Scotchman. He was too level-headed and practical to prove an easy conquest, but in the end she succeeded. They were married and returned to America with the Duntings. Clara and her husband were to live in New York and went to the Fifth Avenue Hotel for the winter. Dick went with them, intending to remain in New York for some months at least.

Dick arose from the table as soon as dinner was over.

"Are you going out?" Clara asked carelessly.

"Yes," Dick replied, as he moved toward the door, "I am going to call on the Dungards."

She looked at him with an angry light in her eyes.

"So you still keep up your intercourse with Winston Dungard?" she said.

"Of course,' Dick replied, laconically, as he left the room.

Clara bit her lips and an ugly look came into her eyes. She was a woman who never forgave an injury, fancied or real, and she hated Winston and Nesta as bitterly and as intensely as ever.

"What's the matter, Clara?" her husband asked, regarding her a little curiously. He had never seen her look that way before.

"There is nothing the matter," she replied, as she arose from the table. "The very sound of Winston Dungard's name maddens me," she said to herself, as she left the room.

In the meanwhile Richard made his way to the residence of Horace Dungard and inquired if Mr. and Mrs. Dungard were at home. No, the butler informed him, Mr. and Mrs. Dungard were dining out. As Dick turned away, Winston himself came up the steps. At the sight of Dick, he stopped abruptly, with a startled look.

"Winston, old chap, how glad I am to see you again," Dick exclaimed, as he grasped Winston's hand. "The servant had just told me that you were dining out."

"Come in, Dick," Winston said, hurriedly, with a quick glance at Hammond, the butler, standing by the open door.

He led the way into the house and to a room upon the third floor. It was a handsomely furnished room, but Dick noted at once that there were no signs of a woman's presence.

"When did you return to New York, Dick?" Winston asked, when they were seated.

"Yesterday," Dick replied. "They all went on out to Ashford with the exception of Clara, her husband and myself."

Winston looked up quickly.

"So your sister is married?"

"Yes, she's married to a rich Scotchman, Abel Rostarn, whom we met abroad."

"Is it her intention to remain for any length of time in New York?"

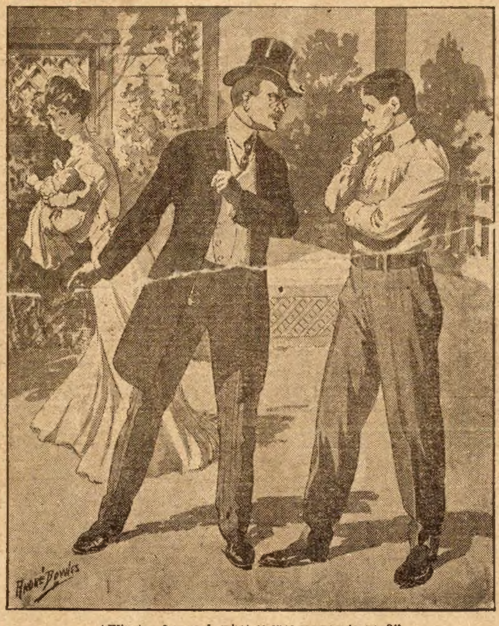
"Why, yes," Dick replied, somewhat surprised at Winston's interest in Clara. "Is Mrs. Dungard at home?" he asked.

"No, Nesta is not here, Dick," Winston leaned toward him and spoke in a lower tone, "I have something to tell you which will no doubt surprise you. When you inquired at the door for Mrs. Dungard Hammond thought that you had reference to my brother's wife. She is the only person of that name in this house. Nesta, my wife, has never crossed the threshold of my brother's house nor has he the slightest suspicion of my marriage."

"Do you mean me to understand that you have never acknowledged your marriage?" asked Dick.

"Let me explain the whole matter to you," said Winston, and this he proceeded to do. "It would mean utter ruin to me for Horace to know now," he concluded, dejectedly. "He would never forgive the deception even were there any possibility of his accepting Nesta which there is not. My course of action may seem weak to you, but what else could I do? I am entirely dependent upon Horace. If it had been a question of myself alone I might perhaps have acted differently, but there was Nesta."

"I am awfully sorry, old fellow, that things turned out so unpleasantly," said Dick. "Of course you know that your secret is safe with me." He paused a moment and then added, with a troubled look on his face, "but there is Clara."



"Winston Dungard, what is that woman to you?"

"Is she still vindictive against us?" asked Winston.

Dick nodded.

"I fear so."

"Then heaven knows what will be the result. If she betrays me to Horace it means, as I told you before, ruin for me."

Dick sat thinking deeply for a few moments.

"I can think of but one thing to do," he said, at length, "and that is for me to make an appeal to her. I may be able to induce her to remain silent about the marriage."

"Heaven grant that you may," said Winston, passionately. "I dare not let myself think of Nesta and the child if I should suddenly be thrown upon my own resources."

A flush rose in Dick's face.

"And you have a little child?" he said.

Upon his return to the hotel Dick inquired of Clara's maid if her mistress was still up, and, receiving an answer in the affirmative, he went to the private parlor of the Rostarns where he found Clara alone yawning over a novel.

She looked up, as Dick entered, and asked, with a sneering smile:

"Well, did you see your friends?"

"I saw Winston," Dick replied, "but I did not see Mrs. Dungard. She is not living at Horace Dungard's."

"Indeed!" She looked at him a little curiously for Dick could not conceal the fact that he was disturbed.

"There is something I want to say to you, Clara," he went on. "Winston has never acknowledged his marriage; circumstances arose which made it prudent to conceal the marriage from his brother. "He briefly related what those circumstances were. "I tell you this,' he concluded, "so that you will say nothing about the marriage."

She laughed. Dick's heart sank as he looked at her. Her face was flushed and there was expression of malicious triumph in her eyes.

"So you wish me to be a party to Winston Dungard's cowardly deception of his brother," she said. "Why should I spare him?"

"Why should you try to injure him? It wasn't his fault that you made the mistake that you did?" cried Dick, impetuously, and almost immediately regretted his words when he saw the look that came into her eyes.

"We will not argue that question," she said.

"Will you give me a promise not to mention the marriage?" asked Dick, desperately.

"I will give you no promise whatever." She arose, as she spoke, and moved toward the door leading into her bedroom. "I am going to bed, good-night,' and she left him.

The next day Dick sought Winston and told him the result of his interview with Clara.

"And what do you think she intends doing?" asked Winston, anxiously.

He looked so pale and harassed that Dick tried to reassure him.

"Oh, its very probable that she intends to keep quiet about the marriage, but she can't help being unpleasant, that's her nature."

"Well, we must hope for the best," said Winston. "I shall not say anything to Nesta. It would worry her. I fear she frets a great deal as it is. Dick, I want to take you out to the cottage to see Nesta, and," he smiled, "the baby."

"I—I shall be delighted,' stammered poor Dick, his heart beating tumultuously.

They went out to the cottage that afternoon and the hour he spent there was the happiest Dick had known since Nesta became Winston's wife. Nesta, who really had a sincere regard for Dick, was genuinely glad to see him again. The baby was duly exhibited and admired. The child had Nesta's pink cheeks, dark blue eyes and curly black hair. Dick's heart went out to the little thing and when the baby let him take her awkwardly in his arms, and laughed and cooed, Dick was extravagantly delighted.

He became quite a frequent visitor at the cottage after that. Nesta, whose life was a very lonely one, was always glad to see him, and the baby, little Daisy, soon grew to be as fond of him as of her father of whom she saw much less.

Winston had met Mrs. Rostarn quite frequently in society. Gratia entertained a great deal and he could always not avoid being present. Mrs. Rostarn's manner to him was conventional, she was simply civil, and Winston could not determine whether she still had any animosity toward him or not. As the weeks passed, however, and she made no sign, he began to hope that all would be well. She and Gratia had met and Clara was a guest at all the social functions at the Dungard residence.

CHAPTER XIII.

BETRAYED.

On the 29th day of March Gratia gave an elaborate ball. Mrs. Rostarn was present in a Parisian costume of white satin and black lace, wearing diamonds and opals. Alma Contare was also at the ball, in a clinging gown of pale blue crepe. But there was no woman present as lovely as the young hostess in a gown of black tulle, trimmed with gold passementerie, with diamond stars in her hair and on her breast.

"I should have painted you in that costume, Mrs. Dungard," Hugh Delavan remarked to her during the evening. "It is marvelously becoming."

"I think I prefer that simple white gown and the red roses," said Horace Dungard, who was standing near them. "Of one thing I am convinced, the picture could not be improved upon."

The artist glanced at him oddly.

"I am very glad it pleases you," he said, quietly.

At that moment Clara Rostarn came up to them.

"Mrs. Dungard," she said, "I am going to use my new horses and carriage for the first time tomorrow and I want you and Mr. Dungard to come with me for a drive. Will you afford me that pleasure?"

"Why I shall be pleased to do so," Gratia replied.

He bowed.

"Thank you; I shall be glad to accompany you."

Promptly at three o'clock upon the afternoon following Mrs. Rostarn's handsome new carriage and splendidly matched bays stopped at the bank for Horace Dungard. After he had fully admired the really elegant turnout he entered the carriage and they drove off. It was one of those rare days in March that has the warmth almost of June.

"I thought it would be pleasant to drive out to the suburbs," Clara remarked.

"You prefer horses to an automobile, Mrs. Rostarn?" said Horace Dungard.

"Yes, I think that I do," Clara replied. "My father has recently purchased an automobile and the children and their governess enjoy it immensely Mademoiselle St Maur, the French governess whom we brought from Paris, is an expert chauffeur."

"Did you not once have a governess by the name of Marvin?" asked Horace Dungard, and there was something so unusual in the tone of his voice that Gratia glanced at him a little curiously.

"Yes," Clara replied. "But she left us very abruptly more than a year ago, saying that she was going to be married. She was quite pretty, but I never cared particularly for her. She always gave me the impression that she was treacherous."

Horace Dungard, who had started slightly at her first words, made no further remark, but his face had grown set and stern. Clara, with a furtive glance at him, turned and began a conversation with Gratia relative to a reception they were to attend that evening.

They were approaching a pretty cottage when Gratia leaned forward and exclaimed:

"Why, how much that man on the lawn looks like Winston. It is Winston.'

Both Clara and Horace Dungard looked toward the cottage, upon the lawn of which stood Winston and Nesta with little Daisy perched on her father's shoulders.

After one glance Horace Dungard turned to Clara Rostarn, his face colorless to the lips.

"Mrs. Rostarn," he said, pointing to the pretty group upon the lawn, "you see that woman. Tell me, is she the governess, of the name of Marvin, of whom you were speaking a few moments ago:

Clara Rostarn appeared to hesitate.

"Kindly answer me, madam,' again said Horace Dungard, while he leaned forward with the evident intention of attracting the attention of the coachman.

"Yes," Clara replied, "that is the same woman."

Horace touched the coachman on the shoulder.

"Pardon me," he said to Clara, "but I wish to alight."

The carriage stopped almost directly in front of the cottage. Horace Dungard stepped out, opened the gate and walked slowly toward the group upon the lawn. Nesta saw him first and said something in a low voice to her husband. She had never seen Horace and was unprepared for the effect his presence had upon her husband. The latter started back and his face whitened. Turning quickly he placed the child in Nesta's arms, saying:

"Go into the house, dear."

Then Nesta understood that the man, who looked upon her with a mixture of hatred and abrorrence in his eyes, was her husband's brother, Horace Dungard, and, pale and trembling, she turned and passed into the house.

"Winston Dungard, what is that woman to you?" asked Horace.

For the first time Winston lifted his eyes and looked his brother steadily in the face.

"She is my wife," he replied.

A storm of emotion swept Horace Dungard's face. In that moment Winston felt for him a feeling of pity, for he realized how terrible was the blow of such a knowledge. It was a moment or so before Horace Dungard could master himself sufficiently to speak.

"So," he said, "after promising me that you would give up the daughter of the man who so basely wronged your sister, you married her?"

Winston's first impulse was to deny this, but, upon second thought, it occurred to him that to tell the truth would not make matters any better, so he decided to remain silent and so committed a second fatal error.

"You remember what I said to you when you told me of your love for Charles Marvin's daughter," Horace continued, as Winston did not speak. "As it is impossible that I could have changed my views upon the subject, it is hardly necessary for me to repeat what I said to you at that time. You understand that from this day forth you are as dead to me as though the coffin lid had closed above you."

"Horace, are we to part like this?" cried Winston, the brother-love in his heart asserting itself.

But he might as well have appealed to a man of stone.

Without even another glance, Horace Dungard turned on his heel and walked away. And then for the first time Winston noticed the carriage before the gate, and, as his eyes rested upon Clara Rostarn's face, he understood.

(Continued next week.)

Maybe the powers that be in France welcome the war with Morocco as a diversion calculated to keep the minds of the people off what the Government is doing at home. Such things have happened in less civilized countries.

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Hay-fever vacations are getting ripe.

Many a man's peck of trouble comes in liquid form.

Usually it is the green youth who paints the town red.

Beware of the widow who acts as if she were glad of it.

Every holy war shows that there is not much in a name.

Actions of a father speak louder than words to his son.

A man isn't necessarily a thief because he hooks his wife's dress.

A man has no right to stone his wife, but he may rock his baby.

Mustard plasters also come under the head of drawing materials.

Pantaloons of a justice can hardly be termed breaches of the peace.

A woman's idea of a stunning gown is one whose price shocks her husband.

Sometimes opportunity knocks at a man's door and sometimes she knocks him out.

After being given away at the altar, many a bride discovers that she has been sold.

It is a well-starched presidential boom that does not look limp in this weather.

Let us hope that the Rockefeller family will consent to cleanse its soiled linen in private.

Any woman who knows anything about men never asks one if her hat is on straight.

Crime in New York may form a wave, but it is inspired by something stronger than water.

Job was a patient man, but there is no record of his ever having attempted to put a tooth-cutting baby to sleep.

It was naturally to be expected that Japan would have to slap Korea on the wrist a few times before Korea would consent to be good.

It's dead easy for a man to get the last word in an argument with a woman if he knows how. All he has to do is to say it to himself in a whisper.

There is coal enough to last us 200 years, and if by that time we are not heating our houses from the sun or the center of the earth it will be a wonder.

Mr. Rockefeller says the greatest success lies in giving aid to others. Mr. Rockefeller has been successful. He has cheerfully given advice to all who would stand while he administered it.

Now that Russia and Japan finally have agreed on every point of their treaty how long will it be until they are getting together in some secluded corner and forming plans to combine and lick the world?

LOVE AND VILLAINY.

A STORY OF THE RANCH LANDS. BY THOMAS P. MONTFORT.

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CHAPTER XII.

DANIELS' REVENGE.

One day Abe went out to the place where he and Miss Clyde had spent the night of the storm. No one at the ranch knew it, but often since that night he had gone there and spent hours alone in sad but earnest thoughts.

To him there was a kind of sacred air about the spot, and it gave him a melancholy pleasure to be there. It soothed and softened his feelings, and made him feel purer and better, and more in tune with the higher and nobler things of life.

He had cleaner thoughts there, and all the dross of his nature seemed to fall away from him. It was as though he stood in the presence of a heavenly spirit—a spirit too pure and perfect to the sullied with common thoughts.

He sat down at the edge of the little cave, thinking of her, and of all that had passed between them that night. There was nothing comforting in the recollection of her conduct, for, putting the most charitable construction possible on it, it was little short of unfeeling. Yet it was in a way comforting to him. It was a pleasure to have been there alone with her, and to have made some sacrifices for her benefit and comfort.

As he sat there he looked out across the miles of level plain that stretched away in front of him, and it occurred to him how like his own life it all was. So bleak and barren, and so devoid of all that goes to make the world beautiful. So lacking in the touch of humanity, and the mellow warmth that human love gives.

"All, all barren and cold!" he mused. "No flowers, no love, no homes, no human sympathy!"

Up along the cliff, a quarter of a mile from him, another man was walking slowly and with his head bent. There was bitterness in this man's heart, and it showed in his face, which was clouded with a dark frown, and in his eyes which shone with a malignant light.

The man was Daniels.

He came leisurely on, hot thoughts running through his mind and bitter hatred burning in his heart. He was thinking of Abe, and of the insult he had suffered, and of his desire for revenge.

He was not blind to the change that had taken place in the conduct of the cowboys toward him, and he knew the cause of it. He understood, as well as if they had told him, that they looked upon him as one of those most contemptible and most thoroughly despised of all creatures on the plains, a coward and a craven.

All this had been hard to bear, for in a way he was proud, and he valued the good opinion of his fellow men. At least it galled him to bear their contempt. But this was not the worst.

She had witnessed the insult, and she knew that he had made no move to avenge it. She had said nothing about it, but he knew from her behavior that she looked upon his as a coward, and viewed his surprised submission as contemptible. This was the hardest of all to bear.

He cursed himself for being a coward, as he had done every day since the incident at the cave, but for all that, he was unable to bring himself up to a fighting point. He was simply born without courage and he could not cultivate it.

"If I could only find some way of getting at him before he knew it!" he mused. "If I could only get the advantage of him!"

He happened to glance up, and all at once he came to a halt. It seemed to him that Heaven had answered his desire. His face flushed with joy and his eyes lighted with happy anticipation.

"At last," he thought, "it has come. Now I shall have my revenge."

He almost chuckled as he thought of it. That which he contemplated was not manly, and it was anything but brave, but he did not allow that to disturb his conscience. It was not natural that a coward should.

He saw Abe sitting there before him, his head bent and his mind absorbed in deep thoughts. His gaze was fixed in the opposite direction, and he was plainly totally unaware of the presence of any one else on the prairie.

"I could not have arranged it better," Daniels thought. "I could not ask for a better chance."

He drew a pistol from his pocket and turned it about in his hands, examining it closely. He saw that it was properly loaded, and ready for use.

Holding the weapon in his hand he stole softly and cautiously forward. He kept his eyes fixed on Abe, and he was careful to make no noise.

"Now is my time to get revenge and wipe out that insult," he told himself, "and I must not make any mistake."

Once it crossed his mind that Miss Clyde would despise him for good and all if she knew what he was about to do. But he dismissed the thought, comforting himself with the knowledge that she would never know. If it became necessary to make any explanations he could make them to suit his own purpose, and there would be no way of disproving his words.

Again it occurred to him that there might be a necessity of reckoning with the cowboys. They were, to all appearances, not specially friendly to Abe, but for all that were apt to resent any foul play. He knew enough of the plainsmen to thoroughly understand their sentiments toward a murderer, and how forcibly and effectively they were inclined to give vent to those sentiments.

But again he solaced himself with the assurance that he alone would have the privilege of telling how it all occurred, and he had enough confidence in his sense and versatility to convince him that he could give an account that would show everything in the most favorable light for himself.

He persuaded himself that it would all come out right, and that he had nothing to fear, either from Miss Clyde's contempt or the cowboys' more forcible and effective punishment.

It was his chance to set himself right, and he did not propose to let it pass. He did not know when he would ever have another, and, besides he was never likely to have a better one.

So he continued to move forward, cold and exact in all his plans, and with not one feeling of regret. If he had a conscience it did not disturb him in the least. It did not cause him to halt or waver for an instant. Having assured himself of his safety afterward, he moved on perfectly satisfied.

So cautious was his advance that at last he stood less than twenty feet from Abe, and the latter was still unmindful of his presence. He had reached the point he desired, and he stopped, and brought his weapon up.

He was on the very edge of the cliff, and he leaned a little out as he pointed his pistol and took deliberate aim at Abe's back—an aim that meant death.

In another instant he would have had his revenge, but at that moment something unforeseen happened.

CHAPTER XIII.

A QUEER DEAL.

In a little town in Illinois two persons were seated together in a small, dingy office room in an old building on a side street. They were engaged in looking over a lot of old letters and papers, and in an earnest discussion of a subject that appeared to interest them both very materially, and one of them especially.

One of these persons was a lawyer, a man of small practice, and, if the truth was known of still smaller principle. The other was a woman, a cold, hard-featured creature, with no principle at all.

"It is just as I told you, Miss Daniels," the lawyer remarked. "There is, at the very least, two hundred thousand dollars in money and property, and is willed, every cent of it——"

"To Alice Clyde," the woman interrupted.

"Just so," the lawyer agreed.

"And there is no possibility of her being beat out of it in any way?"

"Not the remotest."

"Is she sure to get it all?"

"Every cent of it."

The woman gave a sigh of relief, and there was an expresion of intense satisfaction on her face.

"There is the will," the lawyer went on. "You see for yourself what its terms are."

"Yes, I know," she replied. "It is plain enough."

"Surely. 'All my property, real and personal, and all my money, I will and bequeath to my niece, Alice Clyde.' That is simple enough, isn't it?"

"It seems so. I guess it is all right beyond a doubt."

"Yes."

"It certainly is. But now, to come to the point. Are you going to do what I ask of you?"

"That is to keep this will a secret for thirty days?"

"Yes."

The lawyer looked doubtful. The woman saw and understood.

"It can be done," she added, "and you know it. No one knows you have it and it is easy to say you have not found any will. You can be thirty days finding it, can't you?"

"I could, only——"

"Well?"

"There are the witnesses to the will."

"What of them?"

"They know the will is in existence, and that it should be easy to find it."

"Let them find it, then—if they can."

"They won't be able to do that, of course, but the whole affair will have a bad look, and I might not show up in a very enviable light. My professional reputation, you know, is at stake."

"And you might lose standing?"

"Exactly."

The woman gave a hard, cynical laugh.

"That would be too bad, wouldn't it?" she said.

"It would be worse for me than you seem to imagine," he replied.

"Yes, I suspect it would. He who has but little can ill afford a small loss. But you must remember that I am expecting to compensate you."

"Ah-m! Yes, so I understand. Ah-m! About how much, may I ask, would you consider a fair compensation for a sacrifice like this?"

"How much do you think your reputation would be damaged?"

"That is a little difficult to estimate, I'm afraid. I should prefer to have you state how much the service is worth to you."

"Very well. It may be worth fifty dollars."

The lawyer looked at her shrewdly for almost a minute, then turned and began to put the papers away.

"I thought," he remarked disinterestedly, "that you were anxious to have the existence of the will kept a secret."

"I am," she replied.

"I would scarcely think so."

"I failed to guess your price, eh?"

"I am afraid you haven't a proper appreciation of the sacrifice I should make."

"Perhaps I haven't."

"I am quite sure of it."

"Then suppose you state the value of the sacrifice, yourself."

"You may not realize it, but nevertheless you are asking a great sacrifice of me. As I said, my professional reputation——"

She snapped her fingers disdainfully, and gave her head a toss.

"That," she said, "for your professional, or any other kind of reputation. I know that you are ready to do anything for money. So, quit talking rot and get down to common sense."

"My dear Miss Daniels——"

"Oh, name your price, and be done with it. How much do you want?"

"Five hundred dollars would scarcely compensate me for——"

"I'll give you one hundred."

"But, madam——"

"That is my offer. If it don't suit you I will bid you good day."

She arose as if to go, and all at once he began to manifest more interest.

"Keep your seat," he said, "and let's consider this matter a little further."

"I have nothing to consider and nothing more to say," she replied. "My offer is before you. Accept it or reject it, as you choose."

"That is all right, but let us understand just what is expected of me."

"Just what I have said. Hide that will and be thirty days finding it."

"Why, may I ask, do you want that done?"

"I don't see that that is any of your business."

"Perhaps it isn't."

"I know it isn't."

"Yet, it is natural for people to be a little curious."

"Yes."

"I would just like to know your game."

"When it suits me I will tell you."

"And not before, eh?"

"No."

"All right. A woman won't talk till she gets ready, and all the world can't make her. Likewise, when she does get ready she'll talk all she wants to, and all the world can't stop her."

"You are quite a philosopher, I think."

"I am."

"All of which has nothing to do with our business."

"Not a thing."

"Then we will drop it."

"As you please."

"Now what do you say of my offer."

"Meaning one hundred dollars?"

"Yes."

"I hardly know what to say."

"I'll give you a minute or two in which to decide. Then I am going."

He was silent and thoughtful for a little while, then, still avoiding an answer, he said:

"Why not destroy the will at once and be done with it?"

"Because it doesn't suit my purpose," she answered.

"It seems to me it would suit it all the better."

"That may be, but it doesn't make it so in the least."

"You might have a fighting chance then to beat Miss Clyde out of the property."

"That is of no interest to me."

"It isn't?"

"Certainly not."

"Then you have no hope of getting the property yourself?"

"None whatever."

"Who do you want to have it, then?"

"Alice Clyde."

"What?"

"Just what I say."

The lawyer stared long and blankly, then shook his head doubtfully.

"I am afraid," he said presently, "that I don't catch your motive."

"And I told you it was none of your business," she answered.

"I thought you had some kind of an idea that you could deprive Miss Clyde of the benefits of the will. I knew you couldn't do it, though."

"I don't want to, I tell you. I want her to have the money, every cent of it, and I don't want to do anything to jeopardize her interests. You understand that, I presume?"

"Assuredly."

"Now, answer my question. Will you, for one hundred dollars, keep that will a secret for thirty days?"

"That is all you ask, now? Just to hide the will that long?"

"That is all."

"And at the end of thirty days I can bring the will to light?"

"Yes."

"When am I to have the hundred dollars?"

"When you agree to do what I ask."

"Well, I don't see that any great harm can come of holding the will back. It will just delay Miss Clyde a few days in coming into possession of her wealth. That's all."

"That's all."

"Then I guess you can count it a deal."

"All right. Here's your money."

She threw the bills down and swept out of the office. The lawyer sat for a long time, then he muttered to himself:

"Of all the queer deals that certainly caps the climax. What on earth she is driving at is more than I can tell."

CHAPTER XIV.

A LETTER FROM HOME.

A few days later out on the plains of Colorado Steve Daniels called at the little postoffice at a way station and asked for mail. He received a paper or two and one letter. The papers he thrust into his pocket without glancing at them, and the letter received but little more attention at first. He merely looked at the address on the envelope and then thrust it, too, into his pocket.

"From Sadie," he mused, "and nothing in it but a lot of neighborhood twaddle and gossip. As though I care anything about what anybody back there is doing. I have more important matters to engage my attention just now. Sisterly solicitude is all right I guess, but sometimes it becomes rather tiresome."

He mounted his horse and started back to the ranch forgetting the existence of the letter completely. There is no telling when he might have thought of it again if he had not happened to thrust his hand in his pocket when he did. Disinterestedly he drew it out and again looked at the address.

He had nothing else to do, so he decided to open the letter and glance over it.

"The old gal is mighty tedious," he thought, "and there is never a thing in what she writes; but she is a true friend, in her way, and, I'm afraid takes more interest in me than I deserve."

He tore the envelope open, and took out the letter, and began in a listless way to read it. He read on till he came to the second page, then all at once he brought his horse to a stop, and clutching the sheets with both hands, read breathlessly, and with wide eyes, to the very end. Then he went back and read it all over again, his face a picture of surprise and joy.

"Dear old Sadie!" he said to himself. "You are surely a brick, and the best sister a fellow ever had. To think of your doing all that for me! I don't deserve such kindness and interest, but I am mighty thankful for it."

Again he opened the letter and read it over, only to assure himself that it was all real. The portion of it that interested him so much was as follows:

"And now I have something important to tell you. Old Joe Clyde is dead, and, as we expected, he has left all his money and property to his niece Alice. It turns out that the old miser was wealthier than we thought, and that Alice will inherit at least two hundred thousand dollars. Old lawyer Graham is the executor of the estate, and I have his word for the amount of the property.

"Alice Clyde don't know of her good fortune. and she wont know for thirty days. I have seen old Graham and fixed it with him so that the will won't be found until that time has passed. It cost me a hundred dollars to fix it, but you can make that all right when it is all over.

"Now, the thing for you to do it to 'make hay whil the sun shines. You have only thirty days, remember, and there must be no dilydallying. Before the end of that time Alice Clyde must be your wife. Understand?"

"There must be no hesitation, no delay, no fooling. If you are going to win her at all you must do it before she learns of the existence of that will. I know, and so do you, that when she knows she is an heiress she will never marry you.

"So, once more I say, get busy and win her for your wife. Don't let any grass grow under your feet, either. A hint to the wise is sufficient."

Daniels folded the letter up and put it in his pocket, after which he rode on slowly, pondering over the matter.

"Sadie is right," he finally told himself. "If I am to win Alice Clyde I must do it at once for when she knows she is an heiress she will refuse to marry at all, at least for years. I have heard her say time and again that if she had the means she would travel, and see the world, and perfect her knowledge of medicine. And she will. So if I am to marry her at all I must do it now."

Presently he scratched his head perplexedly, while a frown gathered on his brow.

"To say I must win her, and doing it, are two widely different things," he mused.

"A while ago I was confident that I could marry her, but since that night of the storm the prospect hasn't looked so flattering. I made a fool of myself, I guess, in trying to patronize that fellow Hostetter, in her presence. And, then, to have him spit on my hand, and not resent it any more forcibly than I did! That must have looked pretty cowardly, and I have been told that a spirited woman can forgive almost anything in a man except cowardice."

He jogged leisurely on with his head bent, trying to decide how he had better proceed to bring about the consummation of the thing he so much desired. He wished it were the old feudal days when men forcibly picked up the woman of their choice and carried them off and married them whether or no. But unfortunately, those days were a thing of the past, and for a man to attempt a thing like that on the Western plains would lead to his being treated to a little surprise party with a most unpleasant ending.

He finally decided that he must have her consent before he married her, and that in some way he must win her. Just how that was to be brought about he could not tell, but he would go on making love to her on every opportunity, and trust to luck to help him out.

"But there is one thing I must do," he said, giving his horse a vicious dig with his heels. "I must have a reckoning with Hostetter. I must make him answer for that insult, and no light punishment is going to do. Very little short of his life will satisfy me. My own pride demands this, and, besides, I must do it to show that I am not a coward, and to set myself right with her."

When Daniels reached the ranch he found Miss Clyde sitting in the shade of a shack reading a book. He lifted his hat and spoke to her with a most ingratiating smile on his lips. She acknowledged his advances a little distantly.

"I have some papers from back home," he said. "Perhaps you may care to look over them."

"If you please" she replied.

He handed them down to her, little dreaming that he was going to undo all Sadie had so carefully done for him. Later when he looked over the papers and found that an article had been clipped out, he wondered what it was, but gave it no serious thought.

In the days that followed he had but two objects in view—to win Miss Clyde and to avenge himself on Abe. In the first his progress seemed slow, but in the last his opportunity came finally.

CHAPTER XV.
AT ABE'S MERCY.

Abe was startled from his meditation by a sharp cry, and looking quickly up he saw Daniels throw his hands above his head and then plunge down the cliff to the bed of the river. He saw that Daniels held a pistol in one hand, and instantly a thought flashed into his mind and his face darkened.

"The damned cowardly assassin and murderer!" he muttered.

He drew his own pistol and waited a moment, his eyes fixed on the spot where Daniels had fallen. Presently there came another cry, which was a call for help.

Abe arose and walked along the dry river bed, holding his gun ready for use if emergency should require it.

A few steps brought him in sight of Daniels, and then he saw what had happened. The bank had caved off, a goodly section of it, and it had carried Daniels down with it. More than that he had fallen in such a way that a ton of earth had dropped on his legs and the lower part of his body, holding him helplessly imprisoned. Abe looked at him a long time, a queer smile on his face, then he remarked dryly:

"You seem to have met with a slight accident, Mr. Daniels."

"I did," Daniels answered. "Won't you help me out?"

Instead of replying Abe leisurely seated himself on a stone and filled and lighted his pipe. After taking a few draws he calmly observed:

"The ground is very dry out here, and there are a great many places where it is deeply cracked. I have noticed a good many of those cracks right along the edge of this cliff, and if a fellow happens to get too near the edge where they are he is almost sure to happen to an accident. I could have told you this if you had asked me."

Daniels was annoyed and angry, but he thought it best not to show it. Instead, quietly and almost obsequiously, he said:

"I know there has been a little misunderstanding between us, Mr. Hostetter, but I hope you won't let that stand in the way when it comes to helping a fellow man out of a difficulty like this. It would be only human, you know, to lend a hand, even to your worst enemy, under such circumstances. You surely won't refuse to help me?"

"Oh, no," Abe replied calmly. "I wouldn't think of leaving you there like that. But there don't seem to be any need of haste. You have a soft bed and seem quite comfortable. Suppose we talk the matter over a little. I am anxious to know how it all happened."

Daniels gnashed his teeth and breathed a curse on the man sitting there so coolly before him, but he was careful not to say anything harsh.

"I have told you," he said, "that the bank caved off with me."

"I don't remember that you did," Abe replied, "but I can see that for myself. You were walking along the bank, I presume?"

"Yes, I was."

"And you got down near the edge?"

"Yes."

"That was very careless."

"I know it was."

"And unnecessary, wasn't it?"

"Yes."

"I should think so from what I have observed. Still, I reckon you wanted to be sure."

"Sure of what?"

"Why, of your shot, of course. You wanted to be sure that you would not miss your aim. Still, I think you could have got me all right without leaning so far out. Don't you think so?"

Daniels' eyes opened wide, and a look of fear and dread came into his face, while he trembled in every limb. It was a long time before he attempted to speak, then in whining tones he said:

"I don't understand what you mean, Mr. Hostetter. I hope you don't think I was trying to shoot you?"

"Oh, no, I don't think anything of the kind," Abe replied. "I just know it."

"But I wasn't," Daniels protested. "You are mistaken."

"Oh, don't take the trouble to lie about it," Abe answered easily. "It is not necessary, and besides it don't matter. I am not exercised in the least, you see. Out here a man gets more or less used to being shot at, so the mere pointing of a gun at him don't amonut to much. However, I do object to a man slipping up behind me and trying to shoot me in the back. That is not gentlemanly, and no real gentleman would do such a thing. It smacks too much of cowardice, and, I might say, murder. If the boys out here knew you had attempted such a thing they would hang you."

Daniels became deathly white, and through chattering teeth gasped:

"And they'll know it. You'll tell them, of course?"

Abe smoked in silence for a time, seemingly debating something in his mind. At last he said:

"Well, I hardly know. I reckon I ought to tell them, but maybe I won't. There is only one thing, though, that will keep me from it. I might say two things."

"What are they?" Daniels gasped.

"Well, one is that you are mine to deal with, an nobody else has any right to mix in, and the other—well, I won't tell you what that is, but it is the chief reason."

"Then you will spare my life?"

"I don't know yet. I haven't just decided what I shall do. I must think the matter over a little. I guess I ought to shoot you where you lay, but that would be too much like murder, and then there's that one reason I spoke of. I hardly know what to do."

"I didn't try to shoot you," Daniels said, feeling that he must make some effort to save his life, and knowing nothing else to do except to resort to his old lie. "You are mistaken if you think I did. I was just walking along there, and didn't know you were anywhere about, and the bank caved in' and——"

"And you went down," Abe interrupted, "before you could pull the trigger of your gun. It is not worth while to lie any more about it sonny, for you are not fooling anybody, and I hate a liar almost as much as I do a murderer."

There was another long silence while Abe smoked his pipe calmly and Daniels waited in terrible suspense. At last, unable to bear it longer, the latter said:

"For heaven's sake, man, tell me what you are going to do. This suspense is dreadful. Are you going to help me out, or are you going to kill me?"

Abe deliberately took his pipe from his mouth and knocked the ashes out against the toe of his boot.

"I reckon," he said slowly, "that I ought to shoot you, seeing as I owe that much to the human race. But I guess I won't for that would be almost as sneakin' cowardly as what you tried to do. No, I guess I won't kill you."

"Then you'll help me out?" Daniels asked eagerly.

"Well, maybe. I haven't just made up my mind about that yet."

"You surely wouldn't think of going away leaving me here like this?"

"I don't know. But come to think of it, why shouldn't I?"

"It would be inhuman."

"Maybe. As to that, though, your attempt to murder me was not particularly human, was it?"

"I should die of starvation. Nobody would even know I was here."

"More than likely. If you had killed me nobody would have known that I was lying out here, either. It seems to me a poor rule that won't work both ways."

"But I didn't kill you!"

"No, but that ain't your fault. You are just as guilty as if you had. It would only be simple justice to leave you here just as you are, and I reckon I ought to do it. But——"

"You won't do it?"

"I don't believe I will. It is just what you would do, though, if our positions were reversed. Now isn't it?"

"No, no."

"You would, and you know it. But that is all right. I am a different sort of man. I am going to take you out and save your worthless life."

"Oh, thank you! Thank you! I shall never forget your kindness."

"I don't think you will after I have got done with you. I have an idea that you will remember this day as long as you live."

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing, only that I am going to punish you in a way that you won't forget it, and at the same time show my utter contempt for such vermin as you are."

CHAPTER XVI.
A FEW HAPPENINGS.

Abe arose quietly, and, taking Daniels by the shoulders, pulled him out from under the dirt. He stood him on his feet and held him by the collar.

"You feel all right now, do you?" he asked.

"Yes, all right," Daniels answered.

"No bones broken nor joints out of place, eh?"

"No."

"All right. I'm glad of it, for I would hate to punish a wounded man."

"What are you going to do?"

"I am going to spare your life, as I promised. I am not even going to hurt you very much. But, I am going to deal with you as your conduct merits, and give you a punishment that to a real man is the most humiliating thing in the world. And that is simply this:

Like a flash he whirled Daniels around till his back was to him, and then he proceeded to administer to him a series of kicks into which he put all the force and energy he possessed.

When he was tired he desisted, and, turning Daniels loose said:

"You can go, now. I hope you will not let this lesson be lost on you. The next time I may not let you off so easy. Git."

Daniels cast one glance around, and he must have seen something in Abe's eyes that did not exactly suit him, for the next moment he went off across the prairie at the top of all the speed he possessed, and he did not look back till he had placed a full mile behind him. He was thoroughly convinced that Abe was right at his heels, and every moment he expected to feel the toe of his boot.

At last, however, when he was out of breath, and could go no further, he stopped and glanced quickly back. Then he breathed a sigh of relief, for Abe was standing where he had left him, and he was safe from any further punishment.

He sank donw to rest, and presently, as he thought over all that had transpired, and realized fully the humiliation that had been put on him, his anger began to rise, and looking back toward Abe he shook his fist at him, and in his heart cried out for vengeance.

"You shall pay for this," he said aloud. "I will have your life for it. I will kill you. I will shoot you if I hang for it."

There was one thing, though, for which Daniels was thankful. No one had witnessed his humiliation, and, above all, Miss Clyde had not seen it. That thought was a comfort and solace to him in the battered and bruised condition of his body and spirit.

If he had glanced a little to the west, to the top of a high ridge, he would have lost even that one comfort which he was hugging to his soul. But fate spared him another humiliation, and perhaps it was just as well.

Abe stood for a little while, smiling grimly as he watched Daniels' flying form, then with a contemptuous shrug of his shoulders, he resumed his seat on the stone, and presently fell into a deep study. Two or three minutes passed so, then he slowly shook his head, and said to himself:

"And she can marry a thing like that! A murderer, a coward and a sneak! Well, the ways and tastes of women must be queer, and past finding out."

He arose and walked up and down with his hands crossed behind him. There was a hard look in his eyes and an angry scowl on his face.

"She must be the most deceptive mortal that ever lived," he thought, "and once I thought her the most honest and frank. After my experience with her it is no wonder I have no faith in womankind. If she is so heartless, cruel and deceptive, what woman can be trusted."

Directly his thoughts changed and he laughed aloud.

"She was humiliated at his reception by me the other day," he mused, "and I wonder what she would think if she knew what just took place? It would be galling sure enough to have her accepted lover treated that way by the one she had rejected. But she will never know, for I shall not tell her, and Daniels is sure not to mention it."

Again the trend of his thoughts changed and he became very sober.

"I don't know," he mused, "why I did it, but it was for her sake that I spared that cuss' life. I had felt all along that it was because he is her lover that I wanted to kill him, but when it came to a show-down it was right the other way. I can't understand it, unless I am a bigger fool than I thought I was."

He took another turn up and down the river bed, and as he came opposite the pile of dirt from which he had pulled Daniels he saw a letter lying on the ground. He picked it up and looked at the envelope, then started to tear it up. The next moment he changed his mind and decided to read it.

Ordinarily he would have hesitated to read other people's letters, but he felt that he had a perfect right to take any privilege with Daniels.

So he opened the letter and read it, and more than once he swore as he went along. When he had finished it he folded it up and put it in his pocket, saying:

"So that is the game, eh? Well, she shall know just what sort of a mercenary lover she has, and why he is so anxious to marry her, and all."

The letter was the one Daniels had received from Sadie.

"She shall have it all right," Abe repeated, "and she, too, can experience a taste of humiliation."

This dramatic story will be continued in next week's Ledger. If you are not a subscriber to the Ledger, you are strongly advised to send in the price of subscription at once. If you do so, we will be glad to send you free one of our King Cameras or any six patterns you may select from our pattern page. Look at our advertisements on pages thirteen and fifteen.

His Lucky Day.

"Saturday was his lucky day."
"Did he pick the winning horse?"
"No. He missed the train for the race track."

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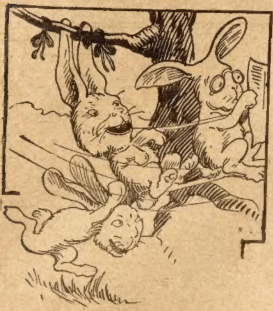


Mrs. Bun—Don't swing too long, Edwin; it will make your ears too large.

JOKES AND

Too Bad.

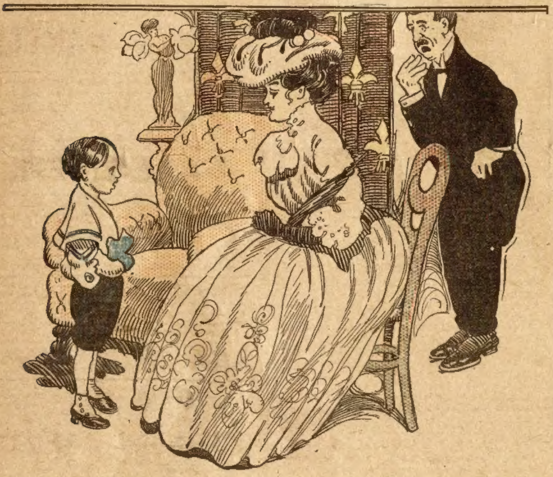
Mrs. Scribbler (impressively)—Whatever you do, never, never marry a newspaper man.

School Friend—Why not?

Mrs. Scribbler—I married one and I know. Every night my husband brings home a lot of newspapers from all over the country which drive me crazy.

School Friend—The newspapers?

Mrs. Scribbler—Indeed they do. They are just crammed with the most astonishing bargains in shops a hundred miles away.



Guest—Well, Bobby, I suppose you will soon grow up and be a man just like your father?

Bobby—Mamma's afraid so!

He Took the Money.

New Clerk (anxiously to show his sagacity)—This silver dollar you just took in is counterfeit.

Proprietor (nervously)—I was waiting on the minister's wife.

New Clerk—But you don't take counterfeit money from women just because they happen to be ministers' wives, do you?

Proprietor—No, of course not."

New Clerk—Didn't you see this was counterfeit?

Proprietor—Concarn it! Young man, if you must know, that's the dollar I dropped into the contribution box last Sunday.

Couldn't Solve It.

"What is this great automobile mystery I hear so much about?"

"I don't know unless it is how people who won't pay their grocery bills can afford to buy one."

She Had.

"Women have no sense of humor."

"But I knew one once who offered a tramp a drink of water."

His One Request.

The irate housewife found the tramp stretched out in her new hammock.

"You miserable hobo," she snapped, reaching for the sprinkling can, "you just wait until my husband comes home. He will bring you to your senses."

The tramp blew a puff of smoke at a butterfly.

"Madam," he yawned, "will you do me one favor?"

"What?"

"Yes, a favor. Instead of bringing me to my senses tell him to bring my senses to me. I feel so tired."

Truthful Thomas.

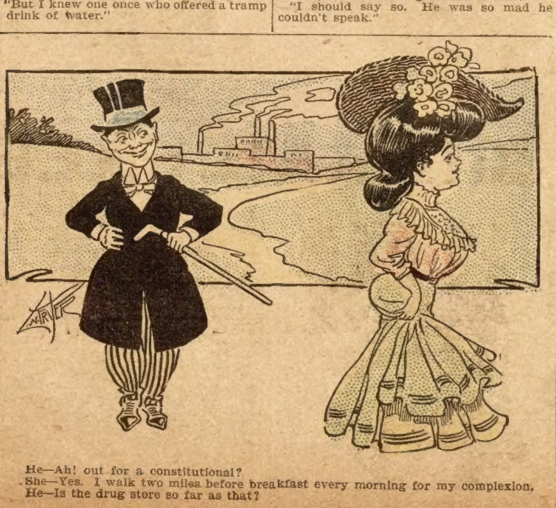
Clara—I hope you would not marry a woman for her money?

Tom—No; not if I could get her money without marrying her.

Just His Infirmity.

"Was the deaf and dumb beggar angry when you refused to give him a coin?"

"I should say so. He was so mad he couldn't speak."



He—Ah! out for a constitutional?

She—Yes. I walk two miles before breakfast every morning for my complexion.

He—Is the drug store so far as that?

"He Used to Be My Papa."

An instance of the complications that follow the numerous divorces obtained by rich residents of Newport was related by the Reverend Floyd W. Tompkins, rector of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, in his sermon to the 1st Regiment, National Guard of Pennsylvania, on Sunday afternoon. Doctor Tompkins vouched for the truth of the story and said the incident occurred at Newport last summer.

Two boys were at play, when one pointed to a man passing in an automobile. "That's my new papa," exclaimed one of the boys; "I think I'm going to like him."

"He isn't so much," remarked the other child.

"How do you know?" indignantly demanded the first boy.

"I guess I ought to," was the reply. "He used to be my papa."

The Russian Press.

First Russian (laying down a native newspaper)—This paper isn't quite so insufferably dull as usual.

Second Russian—No; it's almost interesting. If that editor isn't careful he'll be sent to Siberia.

A Surprise.

Little Wifie—I'm going to give you a surprise, George. I want some money.

Elderly Hubby—That don't surprise me a bit.

Little Wifie—But it will when I tell you how much I want.

WHAT IT IS

Composition of the Famous Food.

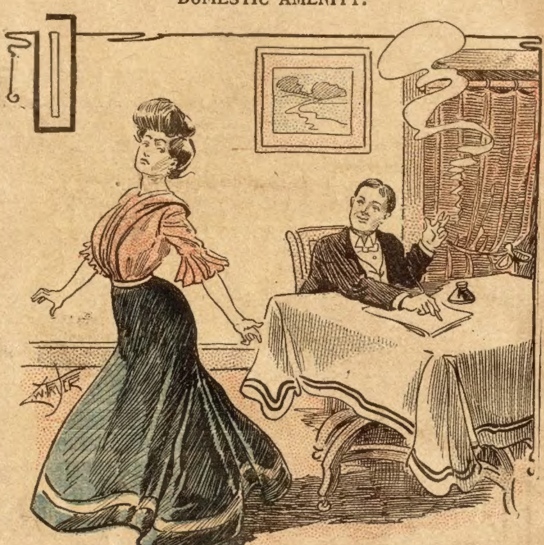
A wide spread interest has been created among good livers, as to the composition of Grape-Nuts, the food that has become popular and famous the world over.

It has long been known to physicians, chemists and food experts, that the starchy portion of entire wheat and barley flours is transformed into a true and very choice sugar, by the act of intestinal digestion in the human body. This sugar is identical with, and is known as grape-sugar, and it is in condition for immediate transformation into blood and the necessary structure from which the delicate nerve centres are built up.

A food expert followed a line of experiments until he produced the food called Grape-Nuts, of which grape-sugar forms the principal part, and it is produced by following Nature's processes, in a mechanical way. That is, heat, moisture, and time are the methods employed and directed by scientific facts gained in research.

Grape-Nuts food is probably entitled to the claim of being the most perfectly adapted food for human needs in existence. Certain it is that user's delight in the flavour and the perfect action of intestinal digestion during the use of Grape-Nuts is satisfying, and the added strength of body Read "the Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

DOMESTIC AMENITY.



She—Cruel man! I shall throw myself out of the window.

He—Wait till I've finished my letter, so you can mail it for me.

Crusty Old Gentleman.

"Some people are so queer," said the young mother with a pout. "Now, I think there is nothing that should be more appreciated than a generous child.'

"What are you referring to, my dear?" asked her neighbor.

"Why, the baby. I had him in the car yesterday and right in front sat a crusty old gentleman with side whiskers. Four times the baby offered him a stick of candy and each time he only frowned. When the soft candy got stuch in his side whiskers he became very fiery and told the conductor. Wasn't that rude?"

Great Gull.

"In the ornithological department of the celebrated museum," related the traveler, "I saw a sea gull that weighed over twenty pounds."

"Nothing remarkable about that," replied the man who spends his summers on the coast. "The last time I was on vacation I met a sea gull that weighed 200 pounds."

"Great Jupiter! Was it alive?"

"You bet! He was running a beach hotel and charging $10 a day."

Business Head.

"She married a successful book agent."

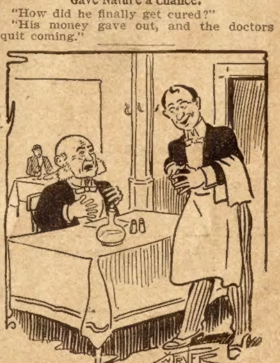
"I don't see what he ever saw in her."

"He tried to sell her a book and couldn't, and he figured she would be a good woman to take care of his money."

Gave Nature a Chance.

"How did he finally get cured?"

"His money gave out, and the doctors quit coming."



Guest—Waiter, bring me a tiptop dinner. You know what that means, don't you?

Waiter—Yes, sah. It's one that you top off with a tip.

J°LLITY
WEIR

Matter of Business.

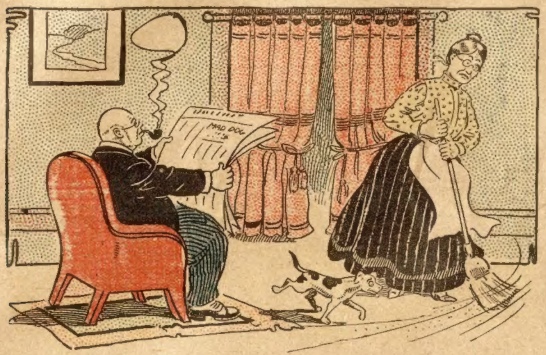
The small boy ate an apple green,
  As I could plainly see,
Yet I did not stay his hand,
  Which seems mean of me;
But 'tis money that I need—
  For I'm a new M. D.

Only Too Willing.

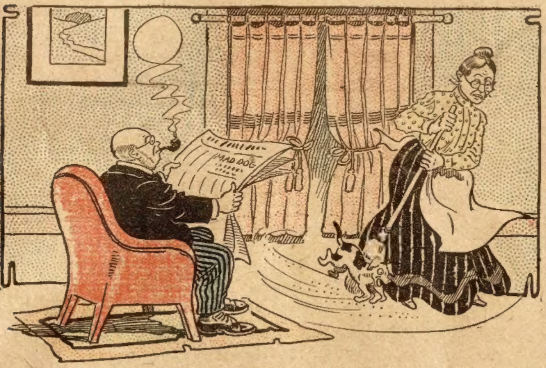
Seedy Party (entering office)—Excuse me, sir, but can you help me out a little this morning?

Mr. Busyman—Certainly. You may have your choice of being thrown out or kicked out.

LIVING PICTURE.



He—Ugh! They oughtn't to put such things in papers. This account of a mad dog's doings is



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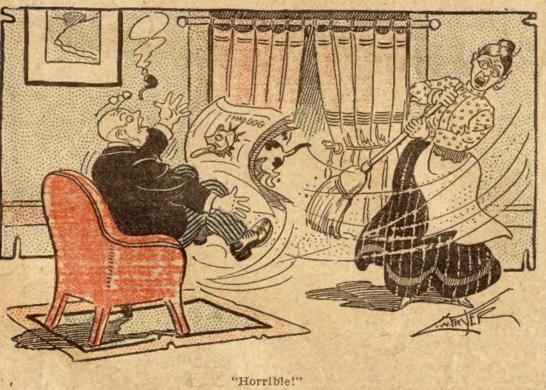


"Horrible!"

Knew Her Peculiarities.

Jack—Answered your aunt's letter yet?

Gus—No. Haven't had time.

Jack—Better do it soon, or the old lady will get down on you.

Gus—No, she won't; she'll blame the postmaster.

Place to Repent.

Singleton—Where are you going to spend your vacation, old man?

Wedderly—At a little town in North Dakota called Leisure.

Singleton—Ah, I see. I believe you did marry in haste.

Better for Him.

First Stranger—This country will never amount to much until we have free trade.

Second Stranger—No free trade for me. It would ruin my business.

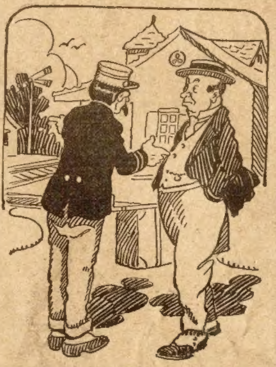
First Stranger—Are you a manufacturer?

Second Stranger—No, I'm a smuggler.

Matter of Feeling.

Mr. Blinks—What? Thirty years old tomorrow. You told the minister who married us only two years ago that you were eighteen.

Mrs. Blinks (wearily)—Well, I felt eighteen then.



Mr. Busybroker—What time does the next train leave for the city?

Agent—At 10:30, sir.

Mr. Busybroker (absent mindedly)—"Make it 10:28 and I'll take it.

Motherly Wisdom.

Anxious Mother—Mr. Willing may be a gentleman, my dear, but you can't afford to marry a man who wears plated links in his cuffs.

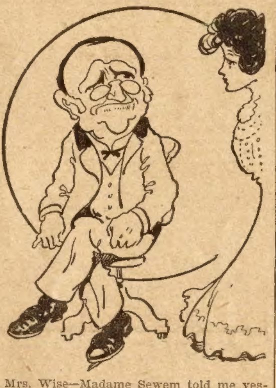
Pretty Daughter—But how do you know that he does, mamma?

Anxious Mother—Whenever he calls in the evening you have black streaks on your shirt waist the next morning.

Something in a Name.

"Circumstances!" exclaimed the summer boarder. "That is certainly a queer name for a mule."

"Oh, I dunno," replied the old farmer. "Didn't yew ever heer uv circumstances over which a feller ain't got no control?"



Mrs. Wise—Madame Sewem told me yesterday that she had to go to the dentist's to have a nerve killed.

Mr. Wise—According to the bill she's just rendered for your new spring dress, he evidently didn't succeed in killing her nerve.

Hardly Worth While.

"So you think these calamity prophets hurt business?" said the drummer who was introducing trick matches in Bacon Ridge.

"Wall, I should say so, stranger," drawled Storekeeper Jason. "Just the other day Hiram Hardapple was going to buy a new suit of clothes, but when he heard that one of them thar prophets predicted that the world was coming to an end in 1914 he changed his mind. Said he couldn't think of spending money for a suit of clothes if he couldn't wear it over seven years, so he reckoned he'd have to make the old suit do."

Much the Same.

Travers—Yes, I met your brother when I was in Arizona. He's a road agent, I believe?

Easterly—Sir, do you mean to insult me? My brother is a real-estate agent.

Travers—Oh, I beg pardon, but I knew it was something like that.

A Hustling Haymaker.

Shortleigh—Congratulate me, old man; I'm in clover.

Wiseun—What's the explanation?

Shortleigh—Last night I married a grass widow who recently received $50,000 alimony.

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CHAPTER XIX.

DISCOVERY AND A CONFESSION.

The following morning between nine and ten the doctor's skiff rounded the bend in the river and came in full view of the lonely little cabin on the shore. Mildred saw it almost immediately. Recognizing the doctor, her delicate face flushed an exquisite pink. Glancing past him to the second occupant of the boat, a look of wonder and the least shade of annoyance crossed her face. Knowing her father's nervous dread of strangers, she wondered that Doctor Hamilton should bring a companion with him. During the months in which he had been a constant visitor at the cabin he had always come alone. Never once had he attempted to force the company of his friends upon them, and they appreciated the fact.

As the two walked up the path to the door, Mildred, womanlike, brushed back her hair, adjusted her collar, then flecked some imaginary specks from off her gown before answering their knock on the door.

"Good morning, Doctor Hamilton!" she said, her sweet face flushing prettily.

"Good morning Miss Blake! This is my uncle, Mr. Golden." She did not appear to have heard the name distinctly and the doctor continued.

"I hope I find your father well this morning?"

"He's as well as usual, thank you. But he is not at home this morning. He took his gun and the glass and went into the forest about an hour ago," she said, placing chairs for her guests.

"I am sorry to miss him," Doctor Hamilton said, real regret on his strong, handsome face. "I wished my uncle to make his acquaintance."

"I regret being unable to meet your father today, Miss Blake," the elder man said. "I have heard so much about Mr. Blake and his daughter that I have really been anxious to meet you." He smiled kindly at the sweet, pale face before him, over which the traces of recent sorrow still lingered.

"I am sorry to disappoint you, Mr.——" she stopped abruptly, while a crimson blush overspread her face.

"Golden," he said, noting her embarrassment, and watching to see what effect the name would produce.

The color slowly receded from her face, leaving it perfectly colorless. "What name did you say?" she asked in a low, trembling voice.

"James Golden," he replied, keenly watching her white face.

"I hope you will forgive me for this, Mildred?" the doctor said, pity in his honest eyes. "You see the George Golden who was your mother's friend is this gentleman's brother."

She turned her dark, wondering eyes from her lover to his uncle, then back again, while she vaguely began to comprehend.

"Have you no suspicions?" Mr. Golden asked, gently taking her hand. "Have you never wondered who that George Golden was?"

"No. Why should I? He was my mother's friend," was the unsuspecting reply.

"And your father," the other added in a low, tender voice.

"My father!" she cried incredulously.

"Yes, your father, George Golden, alias Mr. Blake."

The beautiful girl's emotion was pitiful, but she strove desperately to appear calm.

"Why do you come to tell me this?" she asked in a hoarse whisper.

"I am your uncle," he said reproachfully. "I would wish to see your father and you happy."

"I have never heard of you," was the direct outspoken reply, distrust in her dark eyes. "Perhaps you would be kind enough to explain how you propose making my father happy?" Her voice had just the least suspicion of scorn in it, as she turned her eyes upon him.

"I see you have inherited your mother's loyalty, and the Golden spirit," he said with a smile. "I once saw beautiful Mildred Cadell with just such a look on her face. I congratulate you, my dear. You are as beautiful and as loyal as your sainted mother." He drew his handkerchief from his pocket and wiped the mist from his eyes.

Mildred's eyes softened somewhat at mention of her dear, departed mother's name. Doctor Hamilton leaned against the wall, a look of half-pain, half-pleasure, on his kindly face.

"I know you distrust me," Mr. Golden continued, "but you need not, my child. I come here as a brother and would ask your assistance in restoring your father to his rightful position in the world. I don't know how much of the past you are familiar with, but I assure you your father need fear no longer. The past is dead."

"I don't know what you mean, Mr. Golden, but I infer that there is some mystery in my father's life. I have often thought as much, yet I have never tried to possess myself of the secret. No matter what his past may have been, or the world's opinion of him, I have perfect faith in my father. He is guilty of no crime." She tossed her little head erect with a proud gesture of defiance as she nobly defended her father's name.

"Of course you have faith in him!" he said with a smile. "We all have faith in him. The pitiful part of it was your father's lack of faith in himself." His voice trembled and he turned aside for a moment.

The beautiful girl did not speak for some minutes, and appeared lost in troubled thought. At last, with a weary sigh, she lifted her eyes to Mr. Golden's and searched his face keenly, trying in her simple way to read his thoughts.

"What is it you would have me do?" she asked. "God knows I wish to see my father in happier circumstances than the present, but I fear I know not what. Tell me what assistance you would have me render."

"I would have you do nothing that you think wrong, child. All I ask is that you do not mention my visit here today. Should your father discover my presence here, I fear he would not see me." His voice faltered for a moment. "When your father disappeared from his home so mysteriously, there was a cruel misunderstanding between him and the members of his family." His voice was low and tinged with bitterness.

"I have never wilfully deceived papa," she cried. "I fear I can't do it. He would be sure to find out." she raised her tear-stained eyes to her lover's with a beseeching little gesture.

"Tell me, Doctor Hamilton, what I should do. I'm like one in the dark. I can't decide what is right, or what is wrong." He took her pathetic little face between his hands and kissed her cold white brow.

"I don't like to tell you to do what you think is wrong, darling. I think you might say to your father that uncle and I called to see him. Unles it was absolutely necessary, I would not mention his name. If you are forced to do so, however, I would advise you to do as your conscience bids you, and leave the rest to fate."

"Oh, I'm so glad!" she cried. "I see my way clear now. I will follow Mr. Golden's wishes as far as possible, but I will not stoop to falsehood to carry out the deception." A load seemed suddenly lifted from off her heart. Lifting her dark, limpid eyes to the young physician's she said, "I felt sure you would tell me what to do. You see the way was not quite clear."

"My darling," he said fondly, "don't think too much about it. Fate has played a strange hand all through this game, but she may have a trump card left. All we can do is to pin our trust to the same 'special providence' that treated us so kindly when cast ashore on the lonely Manitou." He smiled tenderly at the little trusting face that was turned toward him.

"Ah, I had forgotten," she said with a sigh. "You have started me on the right track again."

Mr. Golden did not entirely approve of the arrangement, but there was nothing left for him to do but gracefully to submit.

"I don't like it at all," he said with a frown. "He'll be sure to ask questions and should he gain an inkling of the truth, I fear we will never see him. His nervous dread of the past would cause him to flee as he did once before." He drew his hand across his brow in a perplexed, anxious way.

"We must trust to circumstances, uncle. I cannot counsel Mildred to deliberately plan a falsehood to deceive her father. You see her soul revolts at the idea, and I am glad it is so. I trust I may be able to keep her as pure and spotless as I have found her," he said, pressing one little hand assuringly.

"Stuff and nonsense!" the elder man said sharply, his face growing very red.

"Of course I don't approve of deceit in women, but to achieve our object it is the only course left."

"We'll not say anything more about it, uncle. We'll just trust to luck," the doctor said, with quiet determination.

"Of course!" was the angry retort. "You're as eccentric as ever."

"Don't be angry with him, Mr. Golden," Mildred said pleadingly. "You see, I could not do as you wish. I will not betray your presence, though, if I can possibly avoid it, for I believe you wish him no harm."

"Harm!" he cried. "Why, no, child. I would restore him to his own. It would break my heart were I to lose him again." There was a sob in his voice which was very real. "Were your mother only living, she would understand and assist me."

"Mother would never stoop to deception," was the proud reply. "She would assist you as far as her conscience wild permit, but no further."

"Oh, well, we'll hope for the best," he said, rising abruptly. Then glancing tenderly at the beautiful girl, he said: "I might have known Mildred Cadell's daughter would take the course you have taken. Yet for the life of me, I can't see any great harm in what I asked." The frown on his face had given place to a look of infinite tenderness as he gazed at the fresh young face before him.

CHAPTER XX.

MILDRED HEARS THE STORY OF HER FATHER'S LIFE.

About half an hour after Doctor Hamilton and his uncle had left the cabin, Mr. Blake emerged from the wood near the river bank. Mildred watched him advancing with slow, tottering footsteps and instinctively knew that something was amiss. His hair never looked so white nor his face so sad and sorrowful as it then did. The poor girl's heart was moved to intense pity for the poor, weak, tottering old man.

"Papa, darling, what is it?" she asked, advancing to meet him. "Are you ill?" Her voice was sharp with a sudden fear.

"I'm all right, pet, never mind me. Tell me about your callers this morning." He was eagerly scanning her face, an awful tugging at his heart. "Who were they?" he asked in a hoarse whisper, sinking trembling into the nearest chair.

"It was only Doctor Hamilton and his uncle," she said hesitatingly, turning her frightened little face away.

"His uncle!" he gasped. "Is that man in the boat with Doctor Hamilton his uncle?" His face had grown as white as the long flowing locks, which encircled it.

"Yes, he is one of the party camped at the lake." Her lips were trembling piteously.

"Mildred, my child, tell me all. Don't try to hide anything from your old father. That man was James Golden, was it not?" His voice died away in a low, horrified whisper.

"Yes, father, that's his name, I believe. But why do you fear him?" She had gently removed his cap, and was brushing back the long white hair from his brow.

"I fear him, my dear, because he belongs to the dreadful past. Weak fool that I am! Yet I cannot help it. I must flee, else they will drag me back to answer for the past."

A wild, haunted look came into his eyes, that made the poor girl's heart ache.

"But papa, he said you need fear no more, the past was dead. Calm yourself papa darling, and tell me about it. I may be able to advise you." She was still tenderly caressing his cold white brow.

"The past dead!" he cried hoarsely. "The past will never die, but it has very nearly killed me. Listen, my daughter, and I will tell you the sad story of my life. I hoped to spare you the knowledge for a while longer, but the time has come when I must tell it." He paused and with a moan of anguish hid his face in his hands.

"Poor papa," she said soothingly. "Don't agitate yourself. You can tell me some other time."

"No. I must tell it now, else you would not understand." He paused again, as though to gain courage to proceed.

"When I was quite a young man," he began, "father got me a position in the Bank of ——, Boston. My eldest brother was also employed in the bank. Everything went most satisfactorily for the first year. The president of the bank had an only child, a daughter. We met one night at a ball given by a friend of my mother's. The result was we fell desperately in love with each other. Now, my brother had long admired beautiful Mildred Cadell, the president's daughter, and had sworn to win her. You see he was a wild, reckless sort of fellow, and cared little for anything beyond his own pleasure. It appears he had met Mildred Cadell several times during the previous year, and had sought to win her love, but had met only cool indifference. His inability to win even a smile from the lovely girl enraged him, and made him the more determined to win her. You can imagine better than I can tell you the scene which followed the announcement of our bethothal. He swore and stamped and cursed us both, vowing vengeance swift and sure. Gradually the fierce heat of his anger apparently subsided. In public he treated me with the polite civilities of everyday life, but was my most relentless enemy. That was not our only trouble, however. President Cadell began to grow dissatisfied with the engagement, and forbade the marriage until I should be earning sufficient salary to support a wife. This was a cruel blow to our happiness and a most uncalled-for stipulation, as I was possessed of considerable private means and could give his daughter as good a home as the one she would be leaving. We could see that my brother had poisoned his mind against me, hoping to break the engagement. Mrs. Cadell was our faithful friend, and did all she could for us but the president was obdurate. When Alfred—that was my brother's name—found that he could not separate us, he became more bitter than ever. About this time small sums of money began to disappear mysteriously from the bank, principally in ten and twenty dollar gold-pieces. In some way President Cadell looked upon me with suspicion. It was a cruel time and I felt it keenly. One day while sitting with the other members of the family in the drawing room, a coin dropped from my pocket—when pulling out my handkerchief. It rolled across the carpet directly in front of Alfred's chair. With a diabolical smile on his face, he stooped and picked it up, examining it minutely.

" 'Ah!' he said, 'the mystery is solved at last. Perhaps you will be kind enough to explain to those present where you got this remarkable coin?' There was a smile of malicious pleasure on his face as he turned towards the other members of the family.

" 'I don't know,' I said, advancing to inspect the coin, wondering meantime how it could possibly have got into my pocket. 'It doesn't belong to me, I have no gold-pieces.' I said, never once suspecting the truth.

" 'If I am not mistaken it dropped from your pocket,' he said, with cruel delight.

" 'I can't account for it,' I answered, still never suspecting.

" 'Then, by God, I can!' he cried, springing to his feet, and crosisng to where father and mother sat. 'Do you see those three crosses there?' he asked, with a triumphant glance towards myself.

"Father looked earnestly at the shining object. 'What does it mean?' he asked, turning to Alfred.

" 'It means that you see before you the marked coin, which President Cadell and myself marked, to try if possible to catch the thief in the bank.'

"I can see my poor old father's face even now. The darkly pallor of his kind old face haunts my dreams to this day. My mother uttered no word, but dropped to the floor unconscious. I then understood my terrible position. Brothers and sisters gathered around, horrified by the terrible revelation. I declared my innocence, imploring them to believe me guiltless, but in vain. The proof of my guilt, as they termed it, was too evident. Only one of the six brothers and sisters believed in my innocence. That was my little sister Emily. I believe her faith in me saved me from utter ruin. I could read pity, but condemnation, on every other face in the room.

" 'I'll just carry this over to Mr. Cadell, and see what he and the peerless Mildred will think about it.' He placed the coin in his vest pocket, and was about to coolly leave the room. I crossed to the door and begged him to spare me.

" 'You'll surely give me time to try and prove my innocence?' I cried in a frenzy of despair.

" 'I have no doubt you will be given the opportunity of proving your innocence. Please step aside, and allow me to pass. I am anxious to carry this delightful piece of news to the president's daughter, he said with a sneer.

" 'You'll never live to tell it!' I cried, seizing a heavy oak chair. I struck him on the temple; he fell to the floor and never stirred. At that moment I believe I was mad. As I rushed through the hall, I heard my father cry, 'He's dead! Oh, God, he's dead!'

"I went directly to my room, caught up a dark overcoat and cap, put a few valuable jewels which I possessed in my pocket, took from a drawer my pocketbook, containing five thousand dollars—my share of a property left by a deceased uncle, and only that day received—and left by a back entrance. The friendly darkness helped me to escape unnoticed."

"Poor papa!" Mildred said softly. 'I have often thought there was some trouble in your life, but I never imagined it to be so dreadful as that.' She stooped and tenderly kissed his cold white brow.

"I must hurry, dear,' he said with a

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nervous shudder. "I went direct to President Cadell's residence, where I was fortunate enough to find my darling alone. Her father and mother were dining out, she had excused herself on the plea of headache. In a few hurried words I told her all. I was determined that come what might, she should hear the story first from me. She listened, pale and agitated, till I had finished. Then she laid a trembling hand on my arm.

" 'It is I who have brought this terrible trouble upon you. Had you loved me less you would have escaped this dreadful ordeal.' The tears were coursing down her cheeks.

" 'Never mind, love,' I said, 'we have been happy in the past. They cannot rob us of that.'

" 'And we'll be happy in the future,' she answered, a strange light in her eyes. 'What do you propose doing?'

" 'I don't know. I'll go to some distant place where I'll not be likely to meet any one whom I know. I'll manage to drag out the rest of my days in some manner.' I rose to take leave of her, wondering at the almost happy light in her eyes.

" 'Just a minute,' she said. 'I won't keep you much longer,' and with a smile she disappeared.

"Wondering, I sat down to wait. There was fear and awful remorse in my heart. A whirlwind of passion was surging through my soul, and I already felt the hand of Cain on my brow. My father's words kept surging through my brain: 'He's dead! Oh, God, he's dead!' I can hear it yet. In that ten minutes, while waiting there alone, I experienced a foretaste of hell. The dreadful crime I had committed rose before me in all its hideousness. A thousand gibbering, shouting demons seemed to dance before my eyes. Ten minutes more alone with my guilty thoughts, and I believe I should have torn shrieking down the streets. The entrance of my good angel distracted my thoughts, and gave me new courage.

" 'I'm ready,' she said in a low, cautious whisper, beckoning me to follow her.

" 'Where are you going?' I asked, noting the small handbag which she carried.

" 'With you,' she replied.

" 'You can't do that,' I said. 'I have no place to take you, and besides I could not expose you to such danger.'

" 'By taking me with you, you are protecting me. The danger would be in my remaining here. Come, we must lose no time.'

"I made no further resistance. That dreadful fear was stealing over me again and deadening every other sense. The only desire I was conscious of was the wish to take the beautiful girl in my arms and flee with her to the utmost ends of the earth. The following day we were married in a lonely little church many miles from Boston. While seeking for some place of obscurity, we drifted into this wild, lonely spot, and settled here. In this lonely district, isolated from the outer world, we believed there would be safety. That is nineteen years ago, my dear, and during that time we have remained here in peace and safety. But I must move on now. I'll never be taken back in my old age to answer for that crime." He rose and peered anxiously up and down the river, then began to put a few articles together.

Mildred watched him, an awful pity surging through her soul. "What are you doing, father?" she asked

"I must go away, darling. They will be here again soon, and if they find me they'll take me away." The childish and utterly hopeless manner in which he uttered the words filled her heart with fear.

"But papa, where will you go?"

"I don't know, child, but I'll go somewhere. He who befriended Jacob in the wilderness will not desert me."

"But papa, you're ill and can't travel far. Hadn't you better rest till the morning?" she pleaded.

"No, the morning will be too late," was the fearful reply.

"Very well, then, we will prepare to leave at once." The tears were slowly coursing down her pale cheeks as she glanced around the only home she had ever known.

"But you will remain, marry Doctor Hamilton and be happy," he said, turning towards her.

"No, father. I will go with you. We are all that is left to each other, and we will remain together."

"No, my daughter, you will stay and be happy. I won't blight your young life as I did your mother's." His voice trembled and broke.

"No," she answered, with quiet determination. "I could not be Doctor Hamilton's wife now. My place is by your side, and together we will seek a new home." There was the sound of tears in her voice as she bent and pressed a long, lingering kiss on the trembling lips of her aged father.

CHAPTER XXI.
UNSUSPECTED GUESTS.

As Doctor Hamilton and Mr. Golden were returning to the camp at Fish Bay, they observed a white sail coming rapidly toward them. They recognized the boat as belonging to a fisherman who lived on an island nearby. They pasesd on and thought nothing more about it.

Landing at an old pine log, which served as a landing place, they were about to turn up the path leading toward the camp, when they saw the sailboat putting into the camp. They watched it for several minutes, wondering who the occupants could be.

"Why, it's the governor!" Doctor Hamilton said.

"So it is," Mr. Golden replied. "But he wasn't to arrive in North Bay till tomorrow evening. Villnevue was to meet him there."

"Hi there, doctor," the boatman called in his cherry voice. "I've brought you a visitor, I reckon."

"Two of them," he answered with a bright smile of welcome. "The top o' the morning to you, gentlemen," he added, catching the bow of the boat and running her nose in the mud to steady her.

The two occupants of the boat arose, tired and stiff from sitting so long in their cramped position. Mr. Hamilton was the first to alight. His son grasped his hand warmly. Then came a much older man, whose hair was three parts white, and fell in silky waves over a high, intelligent brow. In the face there was power and decision, but there was also something else: There were pathetic little lines about the mouth, and a shadow lurked in the dark eyes that could only be the imprint of a deep and lasting sorrow.

"Glad to welcome you to our camp, Mr. Cadell," the young physician said, grasping the elder man's hand. Doctor Hamilton turned the newcomers over to his uncle while he assisted the man with the luggage.

The three old friends walked toward the camp talking eagerly. "But this is an unexpected pleasure, Mr. Cadell. Mr. Hamilton did not tell us of your contemplated trip to these parts," Mr. Golden said.

"I took the notion quite suddenly. You see I have been thinking for sometime of investing in the timber lands of this vicinity. Before taking any final steps I thought this would be an excellent opportunity for me to visit the district."

"Capital idea, Mr. Cadell. You'll find something more valuable than timber here if I am not greatly mistaken." The other looked at him in surprise. "I'll explain later," he added.

After the first greetings were over, and while dinner was in preparation, Mr. Golden and Doctor Hamilton drew them apart, and related what they had learned concerning the inmates of the cabin by the river.

Mr. Cadell listened eagerly, a glad light in his eyes, as proof after proof was given him concerning his daughter and her unfortunate husband.

"You think there can be no mistake?" Mr. Cadell asked, addressing Mr. Golden and the doctor.

"Positively no mistake. The mysterious Mr. Blake is in reality George Golden of Boston, and Mildred Cadell was his wife." His voice fell to a low cadence as he uttered the last words.

"Let us start for the cabin at once. I would give ten years of my life to clasp my beautiful Mildred to my heart again." He arose, eager and full of hope.

"Patience, Mr. Cadell," Doctor Hamilton said, laying his hand gently on the old man's arm. "You have only heard the half It has pleased God to remove your daughter to a better land, but her beautiful child lives, and my uncle assures me is a living picture of her mother at that age." Slowly the old man's head sank on his hands, and tears of bitter disappointment trickled through his fingers and fell to the ground.

"It's bitter, most bitter," he moaned, "to find her too late."

"But her child," Mr. Golden said, "you will find comfort in her [illegible]."

Thus far Mr. Hamilton had taken no part in the conversation, but had listened in amazement.

"Tell me, James," he said, addressing Mr. Golden, "is this mysterious Mr. Blake my wife's brother George, who disappeared so many years ago?"

"Yes, he is our brother George, whom we thought never to see again. You are familiar with the sad story and the cruel injustice which he suffered."

"Yes, Emily has told me. How delighted she will be to welcome him back again!" he said.

The grief-stricken father did not long give way to his sorrow The strong iron will which had characterized his whole life quickly asserted itself, and in a moment he was the cool-headed, self-willed president once more .

"I vote," said Mr. Golden that we have dinner and then start for the cabin."

"I hope you gentlemen won't think me selfish," Mr. Cadell said, sadly, "but I would like to hear all Doctor Hamilton can tell me concerning my daughter."

"Certainly not," they answered. "We understand your natural anxiety to hear about your daughter."

Doctor Hamilton related all he knew concerning Mrs. Blake, and her long, hopeless illness. He told of the tender, patient care of the daughter, and the loving consideration of the weak and sorrow-stricken husband and father. His description of that never-to-be-forgotten night, when the death angel had entered the cabin by the river and claimed its brightest treasure, brought tears to every eye. As he related in plain, simple words, the manner in which the trader had rudely torn the beautiful girl from her mother's deathbed, and forcibly carried her off, every eye blazed with righteous anger.

"Hello there, gentlemen!" said Villnevue, from the dining tent door. "Dinner is waiting, and the soup'll be cold."

"All right, we'll be there is a moment," the doctor answered with a smile.

"You see," Mr. Golden broke in thoughtfully, "it will be a difficult task to approach this exiled brother of mine. You must keep in mind that when he fled from Boston he firmly believed he had killed his brother Alfred. He fled to those parts for safety, and would naturally look upon us with fear and suspicion."

"Poor fellow!" said Mr. Hamilton. "What a wretched life he must have led, believing as he does that his brother's blood is upon him. He will escape us if possible. We must therefore approach him with caution."

CHAPTER XXII.
THE CABIN BY THE RIVER IS DESERTED.

The shadows were beginning to lengthen as a boat silently rounded the bend in the river, and came in full view of the humble little home of the Blakes. The boat contained a single occupant. It was our old friend Doctor Hamilton. As he came slowly up the river, he observed that no sign of life was visible, save the horses that grazed lazily in the fields beyond. Securing his boat, he walked up the path to the cabin door, with a strange foreboding of evil in his heart. He knocked loudly on the closed door, then waited for admittance. As no sounds came from within, he repeated the knock louder than before, but still no sight or sound of a human creature could be observed. He then tried the door, but it would not yield. He then turned, with a feeling akin to despair to the window. In this he was more fortunate. Raising the sash he peered in. One glance assured him that the inmates had flown. Everything was in disorder, and there were numerous indications of a speedy departure. With a heart like lead and filled with bitter disappointment, he released his hold of the window and it fell with a crash that made the glass jingle.

He stood for a moment and glanced sadly around. Everything appeared to have taken on a forsaken, desolate air. The cow lowed mournfully in the pasture behind the little cabin, and Mildred's little pony trotted up to the garden fence and leaned its head over to be patted.

"Poor little Topsy!" he said, stroking its sensitive little nose. "Has your mistress forsaken you? We must find her, Topsy. Life wouldn't be worth living without her." The devoted little creature rubbed her nose against his sleeve and looked very wise.

The young man looked hopelessly about for something that would give him a clew to their whereabouts, but in vain. No friendly object was visible to point to him the way his love had gone. The disappearance of the Blakes was a bitter blow to the honest, loving heart of the young doctor. The whole love of his strong manhood had been given to Mildred Blake, and he would know no peace till he had found her.

Entering his boat he paddled back down the river. Rounding the bend in the river, he saw his companions sitting on the bank in the shadow of a drooping pine. One glance at his white, anguished face and they sprang to their feet.

"What is it?" Mr. Cadell asked.

"The very worst. The cabin is deserted."

Each looked at the other, then at the white set face of the man in the boat.

"What's to be done?" Mr. Golden asked

"It's as I feared it would be; he has discovered our presence and fled." His voice was low and troubled.

Mr. Hamilton was studying his son's face. The look of keen anguish which had settled over it, pierced his heart like a sword. He had hurried hither from Boston at the first hint of his son's infatuation—as he called it—for this strange little maid of the woods. He had come determined to end the affair at once, and bring his son back to his senses and Boston. But humble man's will is but a plaything in the powerful hands of fate. He could count the hours since his arrival upon the fingers of one hand, yet in that short space of time he had forgotten his mission hither. Instead of reproach, his heart was overflowing with sympathy and compassion for his noble boy.

"Where would they be likely to go?" Mr. Cadell asked, noting with pity the look on his young friend's face, and guessing pretty accurately its cause.

"That's where the trouble lies," Mr. Golden replied, a thoughtful frown on his usually placid face.

"I vote that we lay the matter before Villnevue," Doctor Hamilton said in a low hollow voice. "If any man in the country can help us he can. He has known them since they first settled here, and may know of some place where they would be likely to go."

"You're right," Mr. Golden replied with slow thoughtfulness. "He should be able to help us."

"He's our only hope," the doctor replied, "unless we could get Red Fox to assist us. But it's doubtful if he could be brought to adopt our views on the subject. He might look upon us as an enemy, in which case he would immediately take Mr. Blake under his protection, and a regiment of cavalry would be scarcely able to reach him."

"I'm for laying the case before Villnevue. He will be able to advise us in the matter," said Mr. Golden.

Mr. Cadell took a few turns over the dried leaves, then paused abruptly before the little group. "I for one am determined to find my daughter's husband and child. If money can assist us in any way I am good for thousands, every cent of which will be spent if necessary in restoring them to their rights and freeing an innocent man from a bondage of terror."

"I am with you, Mr. Cadell. I swear before God and man that I will never quit these wilds until I have found Mildred Blake, my beautiful lost love," Doctor Hamilton said mournfully.

"I believe we are all of the same mind, gentlemen," Mr. Golden observed. "Speaking for myself, I can only say, I must find my brother."

"I am one of the same party, gentlemen," Mr. Hamilton said earnestly. "I will assist in any way possible, and I am firmly convinced that all will yet end happily." He spoke hopefully, and his buoyant manner seemed to affect his comrades, for their faces brightened considerably.

"Why, of course it will end happily," Mr. Cadell observed in his most assuming manner. "The inevitable something will turn up to help us," he said smilingly.

"All we need is courage," Mr. Golden said, glancing with a smile at the young doctor.

"I hope I may not be found lacking in that essential, uncle," the doctor replied, with a very red face and a poor attempt at a smile. "But let us be off to consult Villnevue. We are wasting valuable time."

"That's the talk," said the president, taking his seat in the boat. The rest followed his example, and they were soon going at a rapid pace toward the lake. As the high barren rocks to the right of the river came in view, a bark canoe with a solitary occupant could be seen stealthily approaching the tall marsh grass that grew to the left.

"One of Red Fox's braves," the doctor said, recognizing the dusky form as one of the men who had accompanied him to the French in search of the White Lily. "I'll wager a dime he sees a flock of ducks. Watch how he'll steal up to them." They rested their paddles and watched him. He advanced as cautiously as a cat would approach an unsuspecting mouse. Then he lightly lifted his gun and fired. There was a loud splashing of water, then a dozen dark forms rose out of the tall grass and flew away to the right. The Indian pushed quickly through the grass, and picked up two ducks which he held up admiringly.

"Bravo!" shouted the doctor. "That was a good shot, Pete."

"Ugh, good shot," the Indian replied, with a broad grin of pleasure.

"You'll have a good supper tonight, eh, Pete?" the doctor said with a laugh.

"Um, heap supper," he answered. "Red Fox and the braves go early to the Laughing Water for game. Great Chief Red Fox will come down the pleasant river when the sun is low on the Great Water. Heap's supper for Red Fox and the braves there." He jerked his thumb in the direction of the Indian village down the shore.

"Ah, I see. You expect Red Fox home tonight and are preparing to have a feast," the doctor said.

"Um," was the characteristic Indian reply. "Heap supper. Plenty duck, plenty deer, plenty fish. Red Fox and my brothers will have plenty supper." He took up his paddle, and with Indian abruptness started for the village down the shore.

CHAPTER XXIII.
RED FOX ASSUMES GUARDIANSHIP.

As the disappointed little party landed at the camp in Fish Bay, the sun was sinking low in the West. The kettle's were singing merrily over a blazing wood fire, while the French cook was busting about preparing supper.

Villnevue, the old French guide, lay stretched upon the ground by the fire. As they approached, Doctor Hamilton beckoned him to join them as they gathered about the foot of an old pine.

"Well, Villnevue, we're in trouble again," the doctor said, trying to speak lightly, "and need your advice."

"It's not the White Lily this time, I hope?" he asked with an amused twinkle in his old eyes.

"Yes, it's the White Lily again. She and her father cannot be found"

Mr. Cadell and Mr. Hamilton looked at the doctor in surprise.

"The White Lily is the pet name the Indians have given Mr. Blake's daughter," he explained.

"But why are you anxious about them? They may have gone across the woods to the minister's for a day or two. I know, they sometimes do go there."

But the other shook his head. "I don't think they have gone there. Listen and I'll tell you why I think not." He then related as much of the sad story as he deemed necessary, to the old guide.

"Ah! I see," he said, "when Mr. Blake left his home he believed he had taken his brother's life, and he fled to these woods to escape the results. It follows then that he would become alarmed at your presence here, believing that you had sought him out to answer for the crime."

"You have grasped the idea exactly," the others cried, amazed at his quick comprehension. "Where do you think he would be likely to go?"

"I can't exactly say, but he wouldn't travel fur. He has grown pale, and thin these last few weeks. I reckon it won't be long till he'll follow the good wife beyond," he said sadly.

"Do you think he would seek shelter with the Indians?" the doctor asked.

"Yes, I think it quite likely he might go to Red Fox for protection. If so our work is cut out for us," he said with a dry smile, his eyes bent thoughtfully on the ground.

"What do you advise then?" Mr. Golden asked anxiously.

"Nothing at present. I will go to the village tonight, and then on to the minister's. I may be able to learn something concerning them. I can at least find out if they have been at either of those places during the day."

"But is there nothing we could do in the meantime?" Mr. Golden asked.

"What could you do now? Dark will be upon us soon. You had better rest tonight and be ready for work with the first peep of day."

"But Villnevue, you'll let me accompany you to the village?" the doctor humbly petitioned.

"Well, considering the circumstances, I

(Continued on page fourteen.)

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CHAPTER XIII.

KIDNAPED.

The struggle was a pretty lively one for a few minutes, for the two young thugs fought desperately; but Ben and Joe had the advantage, and finally succeeeded in overpowering their antagonists and binding their arms. They had placed ropes near at hand, for this purpose.

Then Ben lowered the window through which the would-be robbers had entered, and fastened it as securely as possible, after which the prisoners were led to the front of the store, where their faces could be seen plainly by the light of the gas jet in the window.

Sure enough, they were Billy Belcher and the young tough who had been with him the day he attacked Ben and the sailor, Jack Marble, came to the youth's assistnce.

Ben and Joe eyed the two sternly.

Belcher and the other two looked down their noses sullenly.

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"Well," said Ben; "we have got you dead to rights."

"Oh, say," whined Belcher; "ye hain't goin' ter do nothin' ter us, air ye, Ben?"

"Why not?" sternly.

"Because; we hain't done nothin'."

"You broke a window and entered a building. That constitutes house-breaking, and the penalty is severe."

"We wuzn't goin' ter take ennythin', Ben. We jest done et for fun."

"Oh, you did, eh?" scornfully.

"Yes."

"Did they talk that way when you overheard them, Joe?" queried Ben.

"Not a bit of it! They said they would take any money that was to be found, and then throw the stock on the floor, and damage it all they could."

"We didn't mean et," whiningly. "Ye hain't goin' ter do nothin' ter us, air ye, Ben?"

"Oh, nothing much; just turn you over to the authorities, that is all."

"Oh, don' do et, Ben! We'll prommus not ter ever do enny sech er thing erg'in, ef ye'll let us go, this time."

"Bah, you'd begin planning to 'get even,' as you would term it, before you were a block away from here," said Joe.

"No, we wouldn'," eagerly. "Jest ye giv' us er chanst, Ben! Let us go, thet's er good feller."

"I can't do it, Belcher. You broke into my store, and we captured you and have you here, prisoners; now, if we were to let you go, we would be compounding a felony, for we have no right to turn criminals loose. The authorities must deal with you."

"That's the talk!" said Joe, who did not take any stock in Billy Belcher and his companion in crime.

Ben took out his key and unlocked the front door, and the two prisoners were led out onto the sidewalk. Then he relocked the door and they set out upon the street, Ben and Joe holding to an arm of each of the prisoners.

They encountered a policeman presently, and explained matters to him.

"Bring them along to the stationhouse," he said. We'll land them in jail in a jiffy."

This was done, and when they had seen the two young thugs landed behind the bars, Ben and Joe took their departure.

"My, but you did me a great favor when you came and told me what they intended doing, Joe!" said Ben, as they walked along.

"I'm glad of it, old fellow."

"So am I."

Presently they parted, each going toward his home.

Ben did not tell his mother and sisters about the affair, but it was in the morning paper, and Alice read it, and when he came home to dinner, they asked him about it.

"The account in the paper is correct," he said. "That is why I stayed at the store, last night, later than usual. I didn't want to let you know the real reason, then, for you would have been alarmed."

"True," said his mother. "Well, I'm glad that you have captured them."

"So am I," said Alice. "I have seen Billy Belcher, and he is a mighty mean looking fellow, I must say!"

"Well, he won't bother me soon again," said Ben.

That night as he was on his way home, he was set upon, about the middle of a dark block, by two footpads, and was thrown to the ground and his arms bound.

He struggled as long as possible, and started to cry out for help, but one of the men stuffed a handkerchief into his mouth and shut off the sound.

Then Ben was jerked to his feet, and they hustled him away, keeping to the dark streets, and going in a round about course.

Ben wondered who the scoundrels could be, and why they had made a prisoner of him, but he could not ask any questions, because of the gag.

He also wondered where they were taking him; and as he had a good knowledge of the city, he at last decided that they were bound for the Potomac river.

They were outside of the city, at last, and then the two headed toward the river, leading Ben between them.

They came to the river, presently, and to Ben's surprise, he was helped into a boat and taken aboard a schooner which lay out in the river.

"Heer's ernuther man fur ye, cap'n," said one of the two. "He's young an' husky, an'll be all right fur yer biz, I guess."

Ben heard this with surprise, and waited the answer of the captain of the schooner, to whom the thug was talking—or at any rate Ben guessed that the man was the captain.

"All right," the captain said. "Here's ——." He did not say any more, but handed something to the man, who took it and placed it in his pocket.

Ben could not think what use they could have for him on shipboard, but he knew he would soon be enlightened.

The two who had brought him there, got into their boat and rowed away, and the captain took Ben to the cabin, and locked him in a little room at one side.

He pulled the handkerchief out of Ben's mouth, before leaving him, and the youth asked what it meant, but the man—a rather fierce looking fellow— made no reply.

"Well, this beats anything that I have ever run up against!" thought Ben. "What does it mean, anyhow?"

There was no answer that he could think of that was satisfactory, so he gave it up.

"I'll find out in due time, I suppose," he thought

Presently he felt the schooner moving, and realized that it was under way

"They have set sail!" he murmured. "Say, I don't like that at all!"

There was a little bunk at one side of the cubby-hole of a room, and he lay down on it, determined to take it as easy as possible.

He was far from being easy in his mind, however.

Where was the schooner bound for? What kind of business was it engaged in?

These questions were unanswerable, and Ben stopped trying to answer them.

No one came to the room, that night, and Ben finally fell into uneasy slumber.

When morning came, however, the captain entered the room and cut the rope binding his wrists.

"Will you tell me what this means, sir?" asked Ben. "Why have I been kidnaped and brought aboard this vessel?"

"I am short handed, and I needed you," was the gruff reply.

"But I am no sailor, sir. I won't be able to be of any use to you."

"Oh, yes you will!" showing his teeth. "You'll learn, and quickly, too! You'll be a full-fledged able seaman in two days time."

"But, this is an outrage!" said Ben, rather heatedly. "I am a business man of Washington, and my business will suffer, if I am kept away. And too, my mother and sister will be terribly worried about me."

"That's nothing to me," gruffly. "You're here and will have to do the work of a sailor. Go forward and get something to eat."

Ben realized that it would do no good to argue, and so he went forward to the forecastle, where he found five rough-looking sailors, who were eating breakfast, consisting of the coarse fare usually given to sailors.

They looked at Ben, and then looked at one another and grinned.

"Hev sumthin' ter eat, mate?" said one.

"Yes, I believe I will," was the replyl. Ben sat down and helped himself, as he saw the others do, and then he asked.

"What kind of a vessel is this?"

"Schooner," was the reply.

"I know that. I mean what business is it engaged in?"

"Filibusterin', mate," was the cool reply.

CHAPTER XIV.

PURSUED.

Ben was amazed, not to say horrified.

He stared at the old sailor open-mouthed.

"You don't mean it!" he gasped.

"I shore do, mate."

"And this vessel is engaged in the filibustering business?"

"Jest thet!"

"You mean that it is carrying arms to Cuba?"

"Yas, arms an' ammunishuns, fur ther Cubans whut air fightin' fur theer liberty."

"Great guns!"

"No, they hain't got enny 'great guns', I guess, mate. Leastwise I hain't seed no cannon; hev enny uv ther rest uv ye?"

They shook their heads, and Ben could not help smiling, serious as was the situation.

"I didn't mean that," he explained. "I was just uttering an exclamation."

"Oh," said the old sailor.

"Say, I can't afford to go to Cuba!" said Ben.

"Et don't matter whether ye kin afford et er not, I guess," was the reply. "Ye'll hev ter go, whether ye wanter er not."

"I'll jump overboard and swim ashore."

"An' git shot afore ye hev swum ten rods."

"They wouldn't dare shoot me."

"Oh, wouldn' they? Ye don' know Cap'n Shaw, I reckon. He'd shoot ye ez quick as winkin'—hey mates?"

"Shore!"

"Ye bet!"

"Don' try thet skeem, youngster."

"Then what am I to do? I can't—I won't go to Cuba!"

"I guess ye will mate. Et's hard, no doubt, but et'll be better nor ter git yer carkass filled with lead enough ter send et ter Davy Jones' locker."

"But I don't know anything about the work of a sailor."

"Ye'll hev to l'arn."

"Yas, and quick at thet!"

"Ye bet— ef ye miss gittin' yer head stove in with a belayin' pin."

They had just finished eating, when the voice of the mate roared down the companionway:

"Roll up, here! Tumble up, you lubbers! Come a-running!"

Then there was a great clatter on the side of the companionway, from a belaying pin in the mate's hands.

"Look out thet he don' lam' ye with ther pin ez ye go past 'im!" half whispered one of the sailors, and then they scurried up stairs like scared rabbits

"All hands to set sail!" roared the mate, aiming a quick blow at Ben as the youth came up. But Ben was quick, and managed to get out of the way in time.

He saw that he must keep moving and at least make a pretense of doing something, and so he followed the sailors up the shrouds, this being easy enough to do.

"I wonder whut's ther trubble, enny how?" grumbled one of the sailors. "Ther mate seems moughty excited."

"We are being chased by a cruiser!" roared the captain, who was standing near the stern, looking back through a pair of glasses. "And we'll have a hard time getting away from her, I'm afraid. Hurry with those sails!"

"So thet's et, hey?" exclaimed the old sailor. "I knowed sumthin' wuz in ther win'."

Ben's heart leaped with delight. He hoped the cruiser would overtake the schooner, for in that case he would be taken back to Washington.

He voiced these sentiments, and the old sailor said warningly:

"Ye'd better not let ther cap'n er mate heer ye, youngster. Git busy; thet's ther bes' an' safest thing fur ye ter do."

"I guess he's right," thought Ben. "I'll get busy, and I'll do it now."

He didn't know much about the work, but by following the example of the sailors he managed to help some.

The sails were all set in an incredible short space of time, and then the sailors climbed down to the deck.

The captain and the mate were standing at the stern, taking turns at looking through the field-glasses.

"It's going to be a long chase," said the captain.

"Yes, and its doubtful if we can get away from her," was the reply. "Those cruisers are swift-going crafts."

"Yes, so they are. Well, we'll do the best we can."

Half an hour later it was easy to see, even with the naked eye, that the cruiser was gaining.

"She'll overhaul us by the time we get out on the ocean," said the captain, gloomily.

"I'm afraid so."

Ben heard this, and was glad.

"I begin to think that my chances are good to get back to Washington," was his thought. "Well that will be good luck, indeed."

He did not say anything aloud, however, as he knew that if he were to do so, and the captain or mate heard him, he would get his head broken with a belaying pin.

There was nothing to do save for the man at the wheel to keep the schooner straight before the wind, and the sailors lounged around, discussig the situation in whispers. The captain and mate staid near the stern and watched the pursuing cruiser eagerly and anxiously, through the field-glasses.

Closer and closer drew the cruiser, till at last it was only about a mile astern.

Then there came a puff of smoke, from its bow, followed by a dull boom-m-m! and a solid shot struck the water about a quarter of a mile from the schooner.

The captain and mate exchanged glances.

"That's a polite invitation to heave to," said the mate.

"Yes!" gritted the captain. "But I'm not going to accept the invitation."

"You're not?"

"No!"

"That means——"

"What?"

"That the schooner will go to the bottom."

The captain frowned.

"I'm afraid so," he admitted. Then he turned and looked toward the ocean, the waters of which were visible a couple of miles distant, for they were nearly out of the bay.

The sailors exchanged glances of alarm.

"If the old man is stubborn, an' refuses ter heave to, it's Davy Jones' locker for us, ye bet!" growled one.

"That's right!" nodded another.

Presently there was another puff of smoke, and a cannon ball came whistling along and cut off a yardarm and dropped it to the deck, causnig a scatterment among he sailors. Two or three, among them Ben, barely escaped being struck, and had they been, it would have been sure death.

"Don't you think you had better heave to, Captain Shaw?" asked the mate, who was pale.

"No!" came the fierce reply.

"They'll sink us if you don't."

"Let them!" hissed the captain. "It's prison for us if we surrender, and I'd rather go to the bottom and be done with it!"

"Well, I wouldn't!" murmured Ben, and from the looks of the sailors' faces neither would they.

CHAPTER XV.

Boom-m-m-m-m!

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Another cannon ball struck within twenty feet of the schooner.

"Clear away the wreckage!" roared the captain, pointing to the yardarm, and the sailors leaped to obey. They cut the ropes and threw the yardarm overboard.

Boom-m-m-m-m!

A cannon ball struck the rail forward and tore some of it away.

"They are pretty good gunners," said the mate, moving nervously about.

"Yes," agreed the captain. "They'll hit us between wind and water sooner or later, and then it will be all over."

Ben was doing some thinking. He did not want to be drowned, but he was certain that he would be, unless something was done.

But what could be done? And who would do it?

He looked at the sailors, and decided that they would not try to do anything.

Ben looked at the captain and came to a decision.

"I'm going to try to get the men to make a prisoner of him and then heave the schooner to," was his thought.

He whispered to the old sailor, saying:

"Let's make the captain a prisoner, and then stop the schooner and surrender."

The old man pondered a moment, and then said:

"I'm fur doin' et, mate."

"All right; tell the other men."

The old man spoke to each of the other sailors in turn, and they were evidently all in for it, as Ben could tell by the expression on their faces.

The captain and mate were facing toward the rear looking at the cruiser, and this gave the sailors a good opportunity to consult together without being seen.

It would be a good opportunity for executing their purpose, too, and Ben realized this, and the moment the old sailor came to him and told him that the men were in favor of the plan, he said:

"Come along, then! If we are going to make the captain prisoner, let's do it now."

"Lead on, mate. We'll be with ye!"

Ben motioned to the men, and moved toward the point where he captain and mate stood.

They were close upon the two before their coming was discovered, and then the two whirled and the captain exclaimed:

"What does this mean? What are you doing here?"

Boom-m-m-m-m!

Another cannon ball struck close to the schooner at this moment.

"We want you to surrender and heave to, sir," said Ben, boldly.

"Back to your part of the ship!" roared the captain. "This is mutiny! Back, or I'll kill the last one of you!" and he made a motion as if to draw a revolver from a belt at his waist.

"Down him, men!" cried Ben, and he leaped forward and seized hold of the captain, who shook the youth off as if he were a child; but the sailors were upon him, now, and he was quickly thrown to the deck and his arms bound. The mate, too, was served in the same manner.

"Now heave the schooner to!" cried Ben, and the sailors hastened to obey him.

A few minutes later the vessel was hove to, and Ben and the sailors breathed more freely. The mate, even though tied up like the captain, was better satisfied than when they were running before the wind, with the cruiser in chase and firing at the schooner. The captain was the only one who was not satisfied with the state of affairs.

The cruiser came on at a lively rate, and was soon close alongside where it came to a stop, also.

The captain and first officer came aboard.

"Who commands here?" the captain asked.

"I guess he does, cap'n," said the old sailor, tipping his hat and pointing to Ben.

The captain looked at Ben in surprise.

Then he happened to catch sight of the captain and mate lying trussed up, aft, and a look of comprehension came over his countenance.

"Ah, I see," he said, smiling. "The captain would not surrender, and so you made him and his first officer prisoners and took affairs into your own hands, eh?"

"Thet's er bout et, cap'n. Et wuz ther boy's suggestion, an' thet's ther reason I said he was in comand. We done whut he tol' us ter do."

"I see," with a smile, and with a keen, searching look at Ben.

"What is your name, my boy?" he asked.

"Ben Bolton, sir."

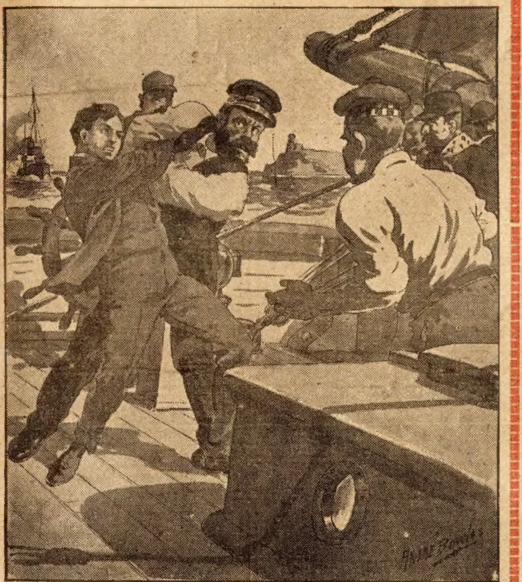
"You are one of the crew? You don't look like a sailor, or one who would be engaged in filibustering."

"I'm not, sir. I was kidnaped, last night, and brought aboard by a couple of scoundrels who received money from the captain yonder for bringing me. I am in business in Washington, sir; I have a store on Pennsylvania avenue, and my mother and sister are no doubt worried almost to death over my not having come home last night or shown up at the store today."

"Ah! Well, such being the case, you shall not be held prisoner when we get back to Washington."

"Thank you, sir."

"Won't ye turn us loose, too, cap'n?" asked the old sailor. "Not er one uv us knowed whut kind uv er vessel et wuz thet we wuz shippin' on."



"We want you to surrender!"

"I can't say as to that, now," was the reply. "Those higher in authority than myself will have to settle that matter."

"All right, cap'n" with a nod.

Then the captain of the cruiser ordered some of his men to come aboard and transfer the captain and mate of the schooner to the cruiser, which was done.

Next the sailors were ordered to take in all the sail on the schooner, and this was done; and they were ordered into the cabin, and were locked in.

A strong cable, running from the stern of the cruiser was fastened to the bowspirit of the schoonen, and then the cruiser got under way and the schooner was towed along with ease.

Ben had gone aboard the cruiser, at the captain's invitation, and there he told the story in detail, of his experiences since being captured by the two rascals while on his way to his home from the store.

Ben learned, from listening to the talk of the captain and officers of the cruiser, that the schooner had been out of commission for several months, and had been anchored a mile down the river from Washington, and had neither captain nor crew. The owner of the vessel was known, but he was in New York. Without doubt Captain Shaw had taken possession of the schooner without leave or license—had, in fact, stolen the vessel.

It was learned, later on, that the arms and ammunitions had been shipped to Washington in packing-cases, labeled dry goods, and that the cases had been taken to a storeroom and placed there, ostensibly till their owner could find a suitable room on the avenue, he giving out that he was going into the dry goods business. Then, at night, and secretly, the cases of arms and ammunition were hauled down the river and loaded in the hold of the schooner. When this was finished, the bold adventurer secured a crew, partly by promise of extra good wages, and partly by force, through kidnaping some when they were intoxicated, and thetwo scoundrels who had captured Ben had done this part of the work.

The cruiser was the Albermarle, and Ben, who went on deck, after talking with the officers in the cabin an hour or so, came upon Jack Marole, the sailor who had helped him the time Billy Belcher and his crony were attacking him, as detailed in a former chapter.

The sailor knew him and grinned genially.

"So ye got into trouble again, eh?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," replied the youth. "But I am all right now."

He talked to the sailor and explained how he came to be aboard the schooner, and the man listened with interest.

When the cruiser reached Washington, Ben was permitted to go ashore in the boat with the officers. When they reached the shore he shook hands with the captain and said good-bye, and hastened away in the direction of his home.

He reached there in about twenty-five minutes, and was given a joyous welcome by his mother, sister, and by Lucy Mayberry.

They besieged him with questions, and he laughingly told them to wait and he would tell them all.

They listened with interest and wonder, when he told the story of his experiences on board the schooner, and when he had finished they gave utterance to exclamations of wonder.

"It beats anythnig I ever heard of!" said Alice.

"You might have lost your life, my son," from his mother.

"Yes, if you hadn't got the sailors to make a prisoner of the captain you would undoubtedly have lost your life," said Lucy.

"Well, I am all right now," smiled Ben.

It was late in the afternoon and he decided to stay at home till after supper, and then go to the store and open up for the evening.

He did this and had been in the store only a few minutes when Joe Hawley came rushing in, greatly excited, but delighted as well, over Ben's return.

"It's in the evening papers, Ben," he said. "I just read about it—how you were kidnaped aboard a schooner that was bound for Cuba on a filibustering expedition; and how you and the sailors made prisoners of the captain and mate, and hove the schooner to, so that the cruiser might overhaul you—and everything! Say, you have had quite an experience, old fellow!"

"Yes," smiled Ben. And then he told Joe all about it.

Joe had put in part of the day hunting for Ben, Alice having gone to him and told him about her brother's disappearance. He had gone to the Bolton home, after supper, and had been told that Ben was back and was at the store, and he had hastened there at once.

Joe stayed till after nine, and then went away, as he had said he had an errand to attend to for his mother.

About a quarter after ten Ben locked up and started for home. He took a short cut, as he was eager to get there as soon as possible, and when he was emerging from the end of a short, dark cross street, he came face to face with the big, burly man that he had hit with the paper-weight in his store the day the two men had their quarrel in front of the store.

The fellow recognized Ben and gave utterance to an exclamation.

"So, it's you, is it?" he cried. "Good! Now I'll settle with you for hitting me with the paper-weight, you young scoundrel!"

And he leaped at Ben with hands outstretched.

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"Finally his cartridges gave out. He hurried to the nearest keeper and demanded more.

" 'There ain't no more, sir,' the man answered.

" 'No more? Nonsense. Why you've got at least 1,000 in that box.'

"The keeper flushed and stammered:

" 'Ah, but them ain't for you, sir. They're for another gent. They've got shot in 'em, sir.' "

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The President's Daughter.

(Continued from page eleven.)

will," he said half-playfully. "But a good night's sleep would be better medicine."

Supper was served at once, and immediately afterward the two set out up the river toward the village.

The moon was at its full and shone clear and bright. The shadow of the trees fell half way across the river. The remaining half wound its way like a silver thread through the forest. They kept to the moonlit water and pushed rapidly on. As the boat's nose rounded the bend below the cabin, the old guide uttered an exclamation of surprise, and shot into the shadow of the opposite bank.

"Suffering saints!" he cried. "There's a light in the cabin." But Doctor Hamilton had seen it even before he, and was speechless with amazement.

"They must have returned," the doctor said, but even as he spoke the light disappeared.

"By the Holy Virgin! what does that mean?" the old hunter asked, in a low hushed voice. "There is doings on tonight, it seems. We're just in time."

On the still night air they could hear the faint sounds of a door closing, then two shadowy figures could be seen going down the path to the river. That side of the river opposite the cabin, was enveloped in the somber shadows of a few lonely pines and elder bushes that lined its bank. The two in the dense shadows strained their eyes to catch a glimpse of the two forms that had disappeared in the shadow further up the bank. They could hear the sound of paddles in the water, and drew their boat under an overhanging elder bush where the shadows were almost impenetrable.

"They are coming this way," the doctor whispered.

"Yes, three canoe loads of them," the old hunter replied.

They held their breath and waited. There was a strip of moonlit water that they would have to cross when rounding the bend. They waited in eager expectation for the boat to enter the moonlight, that they might get a glimpse of the occupants. Gradually it came nearer, and at last shot into the brilliant moonlight.

"I thought so," said the old hunter. "It's Red Fox and his men."

"And they have Mr. Blake and his daughter with them," the doctor said in dismay.

"Yes, Red Fox has taken them under his protection," the other said dryly. "It will take some scheming and a good deal of work before we see them again."

By this time the boats had passed on down the river and almost out of sight. Doctor Hamilton looked at the old hunter with something very like despair on his face.

"There's no use taking it to heart so," the old man said, a note of pity in his voice. "We may as well turn back. There is no use in our going to the village now."

"I'm sorry it has turned out so," the doctor said, disappointment on his face. "I would give a good deal to avoid a brush with the Indians."

"Wal, yes, I agree with you there. I don't half like the idea. You see the Indians have always been friendly, and it won't be to the interest of the district to make them our enemies. But we may be able to outwit them yet," the old guide said.

"I trust so, indeed. But I fear they will outwit us," the doctor replied in a despondent voice.

Turning their boat, they paddled slowly back to the camp in Fish Bay. As they passed around the rocks at the mouth of the river they could see the Indian village to the left, lit up with numerous bonfires. Now and then some one would poke the blazing heap, a shower of sparks would ascend on the still night air, then one by one they would die away.

"The feast is on at the village. Red Fox and his friends will dine royally tonight," the old guide said, with a smile in the direction of the illuminated village down the shore.

This strange and romantic story will be continued in the Ledger issue of next week. Do not miss the pleasure and instruction of reading this story to the end. If you are not already taking the Ledger regularly or if your subscription has expired, we strongly advise you to subscribe at once and get the balance of this startling story, as well as numerous great and thrilling serials that are awaiting publication in this best of all story papers. If the reader would like one of our King Cameras or if you would like six standard patterns without cost, please note the announcement of these premiums on pages thirteen and fifteeen.

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Evidence.

"Life is growing more and more bitter," said the melancholy youth.

"I suppose you are right," answered the amiable friend. "I notice that nobody says 'You bet your sweet life' the way they used to when I was a boy."

Almost as Good.

She hasn't got a motor car
To tear o'er hill and dale;
And yet she's not unhappy, for
She's got a motor veil.

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SUMMER NIGHTS AT GRANDPA'S.

BY JOE LINCOLN.

Summer nights at Grandpa's—ain't they soft and still!
Just the curtains rustlin' on the window-sill,
And the wind a-blowin', warm and wet and sweet—
Smellin' like the meadows or the fields of wheat;
Just the bullfrogs pipin' in amongst the grass;
Where the water's shinin' like a looking-glass;
Just a dog a-barkin' somewheres up along,
So far off his yelpin' 's like a kind of song.

Summer nights at Grandpa's—hear the crickets sing,
And the water bubblin' down beside the spring;
Hear the cattle chewin' fodder in the shed,
And an owl a-hootin' high up overhead;
Hear the "way-off noises," faint and awful far—
So mixed-up a feller don't know what they are—
But so sort er lazy that they seem ter keep
Sayin' over 'n' over, "Sonny, go to sleep."

Summer nights at Grandpa's—ain't it fun ter lay
In the early mornin' when it's gettin' day—
When the sun is risin' and it's fresh and cool,
And you're feelin' happy coz there ain't no school?—
When you hear the crowin' as the rooster wakes,
And you think of breakfast and the buckwheat cakes;
Sleepin' in the city's too much fuss and noise;
Summer nights at Grandpa's are the things for boys.

—"Cape Cod Ballads."

THE SECRET OF THE GOLDEN EGG.

When John Buckley asked the sanction of his employer, Professor Rudolph Kinfein, to the marriage of that young man and Kinfein's niece, Elsie, he expected that extraordinary conditions would be attached to the professor's approval. Kinfein was a wealthy and eccentric scientist, metallurgist, and physician, who dabbled in various strange matters for his amusement. Buckley, his assistant, had grown in time to understand the old man's oddities, and to have a profound respect for the intellect which had already made several valuable scientific discoveries.

Kinfein smiled benevolently, and stroked his long, white beard with his fingers, when the younger man spoke.

"Well, John," he began, "Elsie is twenty-two, and of course she will marry some time. I suppose you are no worse than other men. Now, if I impose a task upon you before I give my consent, will you agree to perform it?"

"If I can," replied Buckley cautiously.

The old gentleman chuckled.

"It won't be very hard, John." From a private compartment beneath the laboratory shelf he drew out a box, and handed it to Buckley. "Open it," he said.

John did so, and revealed an oval yellow object nearly the size of a football, and practically of the same shape. It seemed to be of metal.

"Now, John, there's your golden egg," went on the scientist. "I fixed it up for you in my leisure moments. If you open it inside of a month, you get Elsie and a wedding-present, too; if not, you'll have to wait a while."

"What tools may I use in opening it?"

"That's the point, John. You may use your own two good hands and any instrument which doesn't weigh over fifty grains."

"Fifty grains!" repeated John, amazed. "Why, that's less than a ninth of an ounce!"

"Exactly."

John stared first at the egg and then at the scientist.

"But, professor," he expostulated, "an instrument weighing fifty grains will be practically useless. Why, the blade of a small penknife weighs that much; a thin latch-key weighs more."

"But an instrument much less in weight will open that egg."

John looked dubious.

"But supposing I use something which weighs more?" he said.

"You wouldn't do it, John, if you agreed not to," responded the professor comfortably; "and I'd know it if you did."

John was young, in love, and energetic. His three years' work in the various hobbies which the scientist affected had given him an unusual technical education, great confidence in himself, and a certain delicate manual dexterity which almost surpassed that of his employer, clever as the older man was. It was very natural that he should accept the challenge and bear away the egg.

He found Miss Elsie in the parlor and explained the situation. It is hardly necessary to mention that when the girl placed her pink palms, to listen, she looked decidedly pretty—so pretty, in fact, that John was compelled to interrupt his narrative while he kissed her.

When he had finished his account of the conditions she rose.

"You are to go up to your room, John," she commanded, "and open that egg. I'm dying to see what's in it! No, you can't stay here with me and work on it; I would disturb you."

With the wariness of long experience, she dodged around the table at that moment, anticipating by the fraction of a second a caress on the part of John. From a place of safety behind a chair she pointed to the door.

"Avaunt! And tell me tomorrow morning what you found."

John reluctantly gave up a chase which promised to be fruitless and obeyed.

Settled in the easy chair in his own room he paid the professor the compliment of examining the egg very carefully before beginning operations. He went over it with his fingers, but could feel no joints beneath the yellow paint which covered the metal. There was no depression on the surface. It was his theory that a hidden spring would open the sphere, and he spent the remainder of the evening in searching for it. At midnight the secret was still undiscovered, and he gave it up for the time being.

Elsie was inclined to poke fun at his failure the next morning. As the chuckling professor readily allowed her to try her hand, she spent an hour and broke two hairpins in an equally fruitless effort.

The egg was rather light than otherwise for its size, but John felt certain that machinery of some description, hidden within it, controlled the situation. By shaking it persistently he was finally rewarded by the sound of a very faint clicking. That evening he made a sort of cat's cradle with string, and placed the egg therein. With the contrivance he was able to whirl the egg over and over, in this way hoping to start the machinery.

Next he essayed to saw his way through the metal. He secured a burglar's saw of the finest steel, but was compelled to dispense with the handle, as it brought the weight of the little instrument up to nearly one hundred grains.

Intermittent labor for the next three evenings with the saw, a bit of cloth serving as a handle, resulted in some badly blistered fingers and the scratching of the paint in several places—that was all, if the fact that the egg was proven to be steel, as fine and hard as the saw, is excepted. In desperation, Buckley attempted to crush the obstinate oval between his hands and failed again.

"I've made up my mind to get the paint off," he announced to Elsie. "Then I can tell where we're at."

"We're at sea," she replied dolefully, tenderly kissing one of the blistered fingers.

Buckley secretly agreed with her, but his pride had been aroused by repeated failures and the whole-souled chuckling of the professor, whose sides seemed to be shaking constantly with merriment over his assistant's predicament. He would open the egg now, or die!

The young man took his penknife apart, sharpened the lightest blade to a razor edge, and attacked the paint. Although it clung exasperatingly, in time he had cleared it from the surface. This revealed the presence of thousands of little holes in the metal, each closed by a minute fleck of the paint, which the blade would not dislodge.

It was well into the fourth week when this was done.

"Just look at these confounded needle-holes!" he exclaimed, in disgust.

Under the stress of a brilliant inspiration, Elsie jumped up and clapped her hands delightedly.

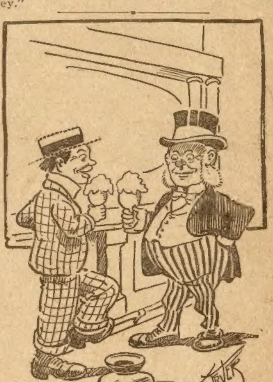
"That's it, John—a needle!"

One was brought, and John set himself to the task of thrusting it carefully as far as it would go into each of the little holes. This removed the fleck of paint, and, as the absence of paint showed that a hole had been revealed, no time was lost in subsequent explorations.

"Foxy old gentleman, your uncle," smiled John, "but he overlooked that point. If he'd thought about it, I know he'd fixed it to keep the paint out of these wretched holes."

It was the evening of the last day of the allotted month that the busy needle, penetrating further than usual, produced the hoped-for result. There was a whirr of clockwork, and a heavy spring, the pressure upon it suddenly removed, thrust itself through the side of the egg.

John fished a metal cylinder from the broken shell, opened it, and, with his arm around Elsie's neck, read the paper which it contained. It was a check for five thousand dollars, signed by Rudolph Kinfein, and payable to "Mr. and Mrs. John Buckley."



Jaggman—Talking about baseball, I used to be a pretty good batter in my young days. Many's the time I hav brought two or three men home.

Gayboy—Yes, and you're a pretty good batter in your old age. Many's the time two or three men have taken you home.

He Came to Dine.

Admiral Sigsbee, at a banquet, was once called upon unexpectedly to reply to a toast. His impromptu reply was very graceful and brilliant, but at the start he was rather confused, and he covered his confusion in this way:

"I am taken aback," he said. "I am in the position of the fisherman who fell into the water and was nearly drowned. A hunter, however, rescued him, and after he had brought him to the hunter said:

" 'How did you come to fall into the water, sir?'

" 'I didn't come to fall into the water,' the fisherman answered. 'I came to fish.' "

Beware of the man who makes a specialty of making excuses.

FASCINATIONS OF THE WIDOW.

A fair-looking widow, endowed with a moderate share of sense and tact, is almost irresistible to an unmortgaged man. Hence it is that men are so frequently advised to beware of tne widows. But this advice applies equally to women—unwed women, of course, for in very truth widows are dangerous.

Think of the number of 'bachelors and widowers who are quickly snapped up by widows. And these men cannot help themselves—the widows go in and win, yes, and often against heavy odds. Given a bach of fine-looking young women and one widow, all desirous of capturing one particular man, the widow is almost certain to triumph in the long run, and lead the gentleman to the altar, to the utter chagrin of her less fortunate sisters.

People marvel at this amazing success, which, by the way, is constantly happening. They cannot understand how a widow fascinates men. They wonder if her experience appeals to the male sex. They are quite sure that good looks can have nothing to do with the matter, and in that they are right; for a widow, as a rule, is no more beautiful than her unwed sister.

Men often admire and marry widows out of the purest selfishness. There are reasons for this. In the first place, a widow knows how to please a man in a general, all-round sort of way. She knows just how to coax, wheedle, flatter, and gull the average man, for she is experienced in those arts. You see, she has actually lived with a man as his wife, and has, therefore, seen every side of a man's nature.

She has learned the art of skillfully handling the reins which guide a man in the direction which she wishes him to take; she understands all about the little peculiarities, the erratic moods which a man is liable to develop in married life, and, seeing that one man is in many respects much like another, if she has been able to satisfy one, she feels herself competent to satisfy any other who comes her way. The eligible bachelor, therefore, easily falls before her. She can, in a discrete, indirect way, hold out prospects to him which the ordinary young woman would never dream of, by reason of her experience.

Then it must be remembered that a widow is allowed more freedom of conversation with men; what could not be pardoned in a young woman is all right in a widow. Thus, the latter commits no particular indiscretion if she in a somewhat subtle manner conveys the impression to a bachelor that in her he would find all the attributes which a good wife should possess. She can relate how pleased her husband used to be with her baking, her cooking, and so on; and bear this in mind, the average man who is thinking of marrying is ever on the lookout for a person who will be able to attend to his creature comforts in a satisfactory manner.

A widow in conversing with a man is very apt to disparage her sisters—not in any direct way certainly; but still, if she is ever referring to those "silly young girls who know nothing," such remarks undoubtedly influence men. And, as a matter of fact, a widow will not hesitate to insinuate that young women are but snares and delusions.

A widow knows how to play her hand to the best advantage. She contrives to make a bachelor feel that, at last, he has met a lady who would make a capital wife and congenial companion,and one who would attend to his comforts in every way. A young girl cannot do this, and the average man, being selfish to the core, the ordinary bachelor falls an easy victim to the wily widow.

Besides all this, a widow is very often a bit of a mystery. Very frequently she arrives in the neighborhood from goodness knows where, and nothing can be found out about her by the local gossips. She gets the reputation of being a woman "with a past," and if she is fairly young, and goes about with a subdued, thoughtful, and, at the same time, sweet look on her face, all the unmarried men in the neighborhood sympathize with and are soon running after her.

A widow under these circumstances finds no difficulty in fascinating men, and has to put forth no special effort in order, if she be so minded, to lead one of them to the altar.

But perhaps the widow's greatest advantage over her unwed sisters lies in the possibility that her former husband left her a tempting sum of money tied down in no way—money which is hers absolutely. Few young girls have any chance against her then. The widow simply carries all before her; for most men are selfish, and they will pass by the woman with the most perfect face or figure for the one with a nice bank account under her sole control.

Yes, there can be no doubt about it—men admire and marry widows out of sheer selfishness in most cases.

"Roostahs Kaint Read."

A little old negro woman entered the mayor's anteroom at the city hall the other day and approached Col. John Irby, asked: "Whahabouts is de mayah? Is you him?"

"Not yet," replied Col. Irby. "I'm his private secretary.

"Ah wants ter ask him ef chickens has got a right ter scratch up otheh people's gahdens," she said.

"The mayor isn't in just now," said the colonel.

"Well, you his seckerterry; what does you think, mistah?"

"I should say that chickens that scratch up gardens show bad breeding."

"Me, too," said the little old woman, edging nearer. "My neighbah's chickens has done ruined my gahden. What had Ah bettah do?"

"Have you put up a sign prohibiting trespassing on the garden?"

"Has Ah put up a sign? No, sah; in co'se not. Ah kain't write."

"But you can get somebody to fix it up for you."

"Your right," said the woman. "What shell Ah have put onto it?"

"'Chickens,take notice. Keep out!'" replied Col. Irby.

"Ah'll jist do it," said the little old woman, moving away. "Much erbliged." She got as far as the middle of the street in front of the building and returned. Sticking her head in the door, she said:

"Say, mistah, you ben foolin' me. Chickens kain't read."

"Hens can't, but roosters can," said Col. Irby, solemnly. "The roosters will tell the hens."

The old negress smiled broadly. "Go 'long white man!" she said. "Ah ain't up on no etikette, but Ah knows no roostahs kain't read."

Then she left, grinning.

How It Happened.

"If yo' will dess puhmit me to specify a word or two, pahson," respectfully said a stranger who had entered Ebenezer chapel just before the beginning of the sermon. "I'll take pleasure in infawmin' de bruddren and sistahs yun dissembled dat Puhsidin' Eldah Fishback enawmously regrets dat he can't be wid yo'-all today, as expected, uhkaze why, he's dead.

"Muh name am Magoon—Brudder 'Lonzo Magoon, yo' mought call it—fum over beyant Timpkinsville; and de eldah descended upon muh household yiste'day, and we had chicken potpie, squinch, p'serves, baked shoat, and mince pie for dinner, and somehow or nudder in her zeal, muh wife—fine a lady as dar is in de land, too!—she took and anonymously put hoss liniment stiduh brandy into the mincemeat, and it killed de eldah plumb dead! 'Twuz a glorous death, and he met it half way! And I s'picions all de rest of us would be dis minute uhwalkin' on de glory-lit hills om immawtality hand in hand wid de eldah, if 'twuzn't for de fact dat de good man beat us to dat 'ar pie. Yass!—he beat us to it. Ladies and gen'lemen, I thank yo' fo' yoh attenshun!"
—Puck.

His White Partner.

Opposite the depot in a Georgia town was a grocery run by a colored man, and while waiting for my train I sauntered into the place and asked how business was going.

"Pore, sah, mighty pore," replied the old man. "De trubble am dat I hain't dun got capital 'nuff."

"Why don't you take in a partner?" I asked.

"No, sah—no, sah. I'se had one partner and don't want no more. One time Kurnel Dawson comes over to my cabin wid a bland smile on his face and shakes hands wid me and axes arter my health and says:

"'Moses, let's yo' an' me dun go inter partnership in de wood bizness. Yo' a powerful hand wid de ax and I'ze a powerful hand to sell cordwood.'

"It appears like a mighty good chance fur me, and so I agrees and goes at it and cuts thirty cords of wood. De Kurnel sells it, and bimeby I goes down fur my sheer of de money. He smiles and shakes hands and says:

"'I'ze dun got it all figgered out, Moses. In de fust place, I perwided de timber. In de next place, I perwided de ax. Den I sent my mewls to draw de wood and I spent my time to sell it. Dat 'pears to take in de hull of de case.'

"'But whar does de choppin' come in?' I says.

"'De choppin', Moses. O, dat was exercise and don't count.'"

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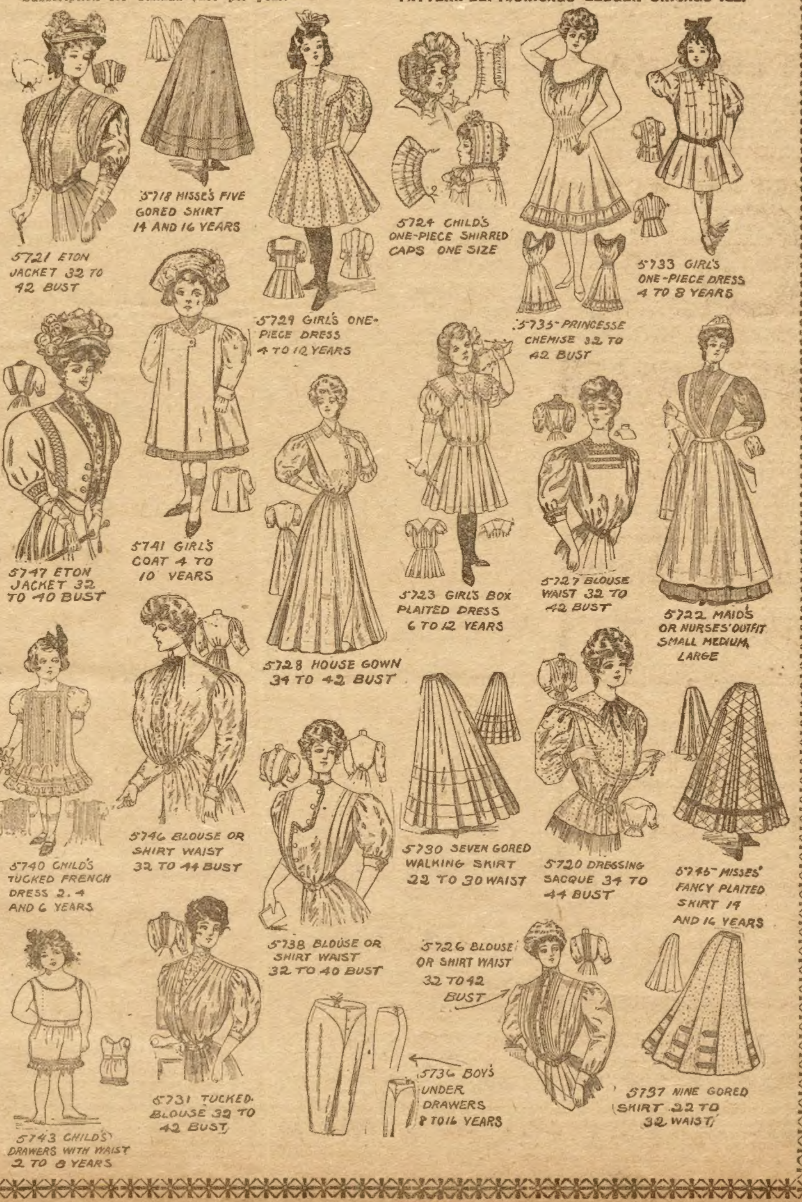
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5745 MISSES' FANCY PLAITED SKIRT 14 AND 16 YEARS
5738 BLOUSE OR SHIRT WAIST 32 TO 40 BUST
5726 BLOUSE OR SHIRT WAIST 32 TO 42 BUST
5736 BOYS UNDER DRAWERS 8 TO 16 YEARS
5731 TUCKED BLOUSE 32 TO 42 BUST
5743 CHILD'S DRAWERS WITH WAIST 2 TO 8 YEARS
5737 NINE GORED SKIRT 22 TO 32 WAIST

FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

A Race for Life.

Violet and Pansy Morris had been sent down to a farm to get some roses into their cheeks. Their father and mother were to follow them soon. The two little girls were very anxious to show how well they could keep house for themselves. They coaxed the farmer's wife to allow them to go to the village alone and make their purchases before their parents arrived.

Violet made out a long list of all the things she thought her mother would want—soap, candles, matches, salt and a large bag of sugar. The children got safely to the village and bought what they wanted.

As they were in a hurry to get back they took a short cut home through a field where the farmer kept a big bull. The animal was feeding quietly and took no notice of them until they were half-way across the field. Then their red frocks caught his eye and he came toward them, first slowly and then on a quick trot. The children by this time were running as fast as they could. Just as they were getting up to the stile Pansy tripped over the root of a tree and fell flat on her face. The bull was only a few yards off and was just going to rush at her and toss her into the air when Violet, forgetting everything but the danger her little sister was in, turned and threw the whole contents of her basket at the bull's head. When he felt the great bag of sugar burst in his face, followed by the candles, which hit him on the nose, and the salt, which got into his eyes and made them smart, he was so taken back that he stood for a whole second. Then Pansy scrambled to her feet and the two girls sprang over the stile and landed safely in the lane, none the worse for the fright.

What Birds Say.

Those who know much about birds tell us that the birds' notes are quite distinct and sound like the following words. What do they say to you?

Robin—Quick! Quick! Do you think—what you do, do you think—what you do, do you think?

Bluebird—Purity! Purity! I-oh-purity. Dear! Dear! Think of it, think of it!

Bobolink—Bob-o-lee, Bob-o-link, Bob-o-link-e.

Crow—Caw-w!

Cedar bird—Tze! tze! tze!

Bobwhite (quail)—Bob-bob-white! More-more wet!

Goldfinch (yellwo bird)—Ker-chee-chee-chee, whew-e, whew-e.

Humming bird—Mouselike squeak.

Oriole—Will you? Will you really, really, truly!

Song sparrow—Olit, olit, olit, chip, chip, chip, che-char-che-wiss, wiss, wiss!

Thrush—Drop it, drop it, cover it up, cover it up, pull up, pull it up!

Bluejay—Jay, jay, jay, whee-dle, whee-dle!

Scarlet tanager — Chip-chirr! Pshaw! Wait-wait-wait for me, wait!

Blackbird—Kong-quer-ree or Bob-a-lee-a-bob-a-lee!

The Missing Pie.

School teachers sometimes ask their pupils queer questions, if one may believe a story told by the youngest member of a certain family.

His mother one morning discovered a shortage in her supply of pies, baked the day before, and her suspicions fell upon Johnny.

"Johnny," she said, "do you know what became of that cherry pie that was on the second shelf in the pantry?"

"Yes, ma'am," he replied, "I ate it, but I had to."

"You had to!" exclaimed his astonished mother. "What do you mean, child?"

"The teacher asked yesterday if any of us could tell her how many stones there are in a cheery pie, and I couldn't find out without eating the whole pie, could I? There's just a hundred and forty-two."

The Lamb-Plant.

Old-time travelers in China and Tartary spoke of a plant they found there with the shape and appearance of a lamb. It had, so they said, head, feet and tail distinctly formed, and its skin was covered with soft down. It would turn about on the stalk on which it grew, and would bend toward the herbage on which it fed; and when the grass failed, it would dry up and wither away. A singularly shaped plant, recently discovered, shows that there was some foundation for this remarkable story. This plant has a woolly covering, and the peasants amuse themselves by trimming it, and adjusting the long silky hairs that cover it, in such a way as to give it the appearance of an animal.

An Opportunity.

A crocodile
With a beautiful smile,
Followed a porcupine many a mile,
Till the porcupine spoke,
From the top of an oak,
And sadly inquired just what was the joke?

"You look, you see,"
Said the crocodile free,
"As if you were made for a toothpick for me—
What wages you'll ask
To take up the task,
Is what I have followed you so far to ask."

Light-Producing Trees.

Several well-known trees furnish good materials for light. There is the Japanese wax-tree, for example, which bears bunches of fruit, growing like grapes, and containing a kind of wax out of which candles are made. Another tree, found in the Pacific Islands, and known as the candlenut-tree, bears a fruit that is full of oil. The nuts themselves are used as candles, and will burn for some time. Still another is the candle-tree, the fruit of which is three or four feet in length, and about an inch in diameter. The fruit hangs from the tree so as to present the appearance of yellowish-white candles in a chandler's shop.

Her Greeting.

"Well," said the Sunday school teacher, "it is reasonable to suppose that the father spoke very kind and loving words to the prodigal upon the latter's return home. Now, what do you suppose your mother would say if you, after having been away for years, should suddenly confront her in the parlor, Tommy?"

"I think that the first thing that I'd hear," answered Tommy, "would be, 'Have you wiped your feet?'"

STRETCHING.

You may stretch your mouth in jolly fun;
You may stretch your legs in good long run;
You may stretch your arms in work, forsooth,
But never, never stretch the truth.

Busy Girls of Italy.

The Italian women are industrious. Even while walking along the streets the Roman girls are busily engaged in knitting.

FIVE LITTLE BEARS.

Five little bears in the mountain;
One heard a lion roar!
It frightened him till he quickly died;
And then there were but four.

Four little bears in the mountain;
One fell from a great high tree!
He broke his neck as soon as he struck;
And then there were but three.

Three little bears in the mountain;
One fell some thin ice through;
But beneath the water was very deep!
And so there were but two.

Two little bears in the mountain;
They thought to have some fun.
One got too near to a precipice!
And there was but one.

One little bear in the mountain;
He was so lonely night and day,
That at last he emigrated
To a country far away.

Didn't Recognize the Nurse.

"What a bright little thing!" exclaimed the society woman, patronizingly cooing at a baby out for an airing in the park. "Whose little one is this?"

"Yours, ma'am," replied the nurse, "I'm the new nurse that kem yistherd'y."

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Out of the Mouths of Babes.

Teacher—Now, Harold, can you tell me what water is?

Small Harold—Yes, ma'am. It's mud with the dirt taken out.

Little Bobby (with paper)—What's an autocrat, Margie?

Little Margie—An autocrat is a person who—who—owns an autocar.

Edgar—Does your mother ever give you anything when you are real good?

Jimmie—No, but you bet she gives it to me good and proper when I ain't.

Friend (teasingly)—Oh, your cat hasn't such nice long whiskers as my cat has.

Johnnie (indignantly)—Pooh, that's nothin'; my cat's got fleas.

A Great Present.

Uncle Ned—What are you going to give your little sister for a birthday present?

Oliver—I'm going to ask papa to get her a football, and I'll show her how to play.

Three Brave Little Ones.

One summer evening two boys and a girl who were rowing off Sea View in the Isle of Wight were horrified to see a man slip on the slimy green weeds on the landing stage and fall into the water just as the South Sea steamer was leaving. Grown-up people are famous for losing their heads in the presence of sudden danger, but these young children kept theirs. Pulling to the spot as fast as they could, they soon came up with the man and let him seize hold of the boat, but in order to prevent him from capsizing it they got him to work himself along to the stern.

Chicks and Chickens.

The cocks and hens of the barnyard are unique among feathered animals, in the fact that they have no specific name. We call them chickens, but, as a matter of fact, a chicken is a young barnyard fowl, and the term should not be applied to an old fowl. We have become so used to calling them all chickens, however, that there is little chance of making a change. It seems strange that the naturalists did not give them a suitable name at the outset.

Bright Future Assured.

Fond Mother (wearily)—I don't know what to do with my boy, he's so sot in his ways.

Old Friend—Won't he listen to reason?

"No; won't listen to anything. When he takes a notion, right er wrong, the hull earth can't move him."

"Well, don't despair. Get a place for him on a newspaper and in time he may become a great leader of independent journalism."